

ANiMATO!

The Animation Fan's Magazine

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ANIMATO!

THE ANIMATION FAN'S MAGAZINE

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rights to their own material.

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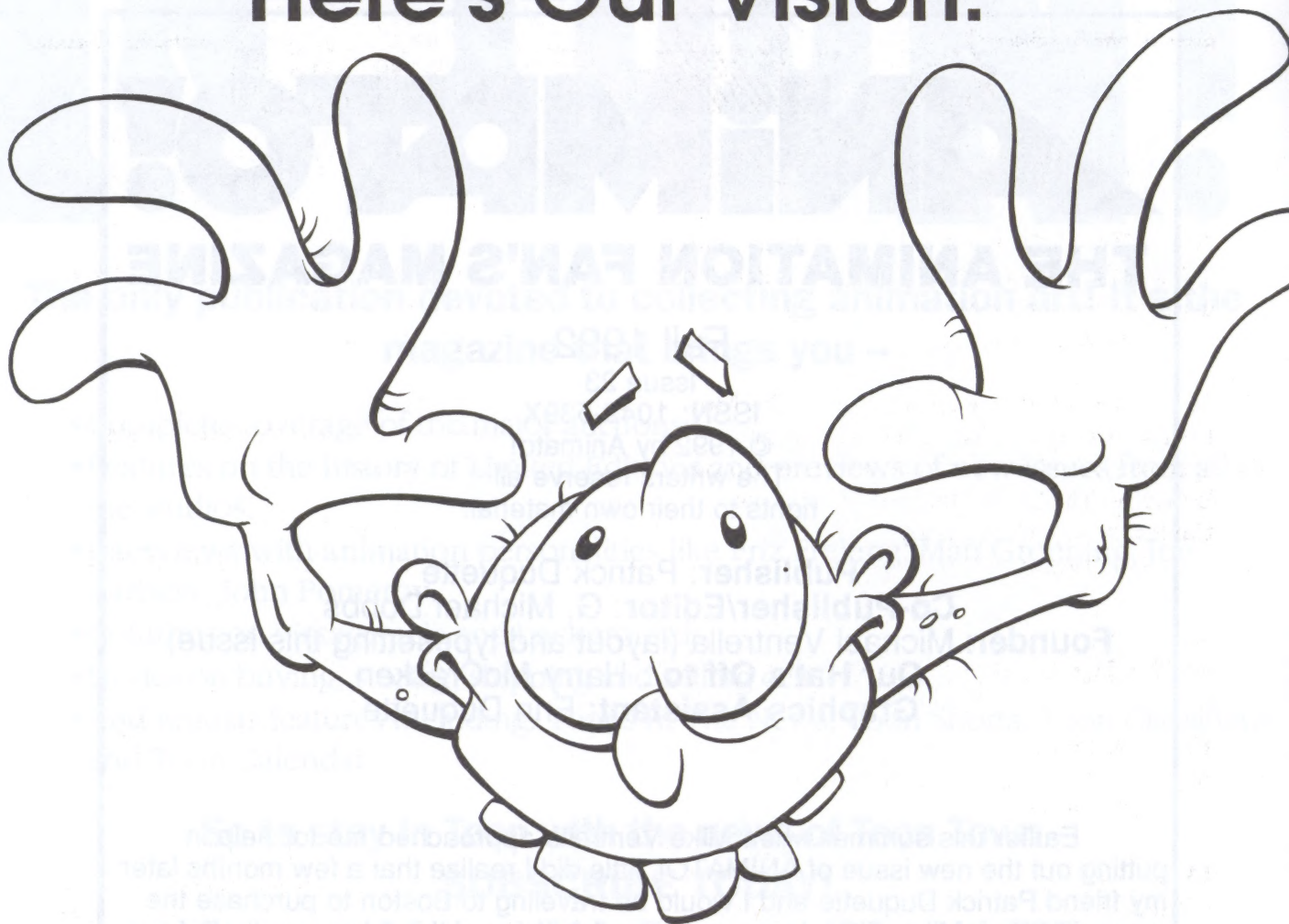
Earlier this summer when Mike Ventrella approached me for help in putting out the new issue of ANIMATO!, little did I realize that a few months later my friend Patrick Duquette and I would be traveling to Boston to purchase the magazine from Mike. There's no road map for life, and this summer all of our lives took turns which were not anticipated. Mike is pursuing a business close to his heart, and Pat and I wish him and his wife Heidi the very best of luck. He will continue to write for ANIMATO!

Naturally, the question is what will happen to this publication. Our intent is simple. We will remain "The Animation Fans' Magazine." We will publish four issues a year. We will be more and more visible at shows and conventions. We have no interest in becoming a trade publication. We will continue to present in-depth coverage of the world of animation from the viewpoint of people who love it. Our next issue will feature a wonderful group of articles on Ray Harryhausen, the first piece in a on-going series covering model animators. Our March issue will celebrate Popeye's 60 years as an animated cartoon star.

We thank the readers and advertisers who have supported us in the past, and we confidently predict "the best is yet to come!"

Mike

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Fan Mail From Some Flounder

write to: *Animato*, 17 Spruce Street, Springfield, Massachusetts 01105

EVERY VALID POINT

Roy Veldboom
Appleton, Wisconsin

I guess one indication of a show's quality is the intensity of opinions it generates, and by that standard, *Tiny Toons Adventures* is a pretty strong show.

About the two stories that were most mentioned, I agree with them on *The Anvil Chorus*. This one didn't live up to its billing. I think that this was intended as an exercise in the Tex Avery "set up a running gag and pound the hell out of it" formula (the dropping motif is a clear reference to *Bad Luck Blackie*); however, what the merry gang at TTA failed to understand is that Avery didn't just incessantly repeat the same business over and over again - he would invent a seemingly endless series of switches in timing, character pose, circumstances, and props.

To return to the current example, *Anvil* would have been more genuinely Averyesque if they had established the anvil-splat gag and then started throwing switches on it (for example: have Plucky hide under an "anvil tree"; have a baby pop up from inside a baby carriage holding an anvil which he drops; have anvils come sideways out of building doorways, and up out of manholes, etc.)

I also agree with Brad's point: usually on TTA when Plucky gets flattened (figuratively or literally) it's usually as a direct result of some misdeed he's committed through one of his numerous character flaws. There was no comic justification in this story.

On the other hand, Brad and Don seem to be laboring under the odd misapprehension that *Fields of Honey* is a documentary of actual animation history. Granted, there are a lot of references in the show that are based on actual, verifiable animation facts (such as the use of the actual character design of Porky Pig) but for crying out loud guys - it was a story!

I knew there had been some "retrofitting" too but in the context of the story it didn't matter. It was primarily a semi-serious characterization vehicle for Babs and an attempt to address and acknowl-

edge the male-centrist nature of the Looney Tunes group of characters and Golden Age animation in general.

(Ever consider writing for cartoons?)

"BEAST" A BURDEN

Dana Gabbard
Los Angeles, California

Beauty and the Beast curiously disappointed me somewhat. It wasn't a terribly bad film yet it didn't have anything very distinctive to make it a unique retelling of the story in the way that Disney's *Snow White* or *Cinderella* are. The Beast was the only character who had a core of recognizable emotion. Belle, for all the forced attempts to make her modern, is bland except for a few flashes she shows in some of the scenes she has with the Beast. Gaston is so silly that he fails the test any classic Disney villain should pass - to be truly wicked in a way that makes them a worthy adversary. Gaston is a big bag of wind.

The story was rather unremarkably told. Characters like Belle's father, Gaston and LeFou are just plot devices to further the story. LeFou was inconsistent - at one point he appears to be a serviceable toady and later he makes little remarks that hint he may not be so worshipful of Gaston. Only once did the story take a turn that I thought showed dramatic insight - when Gaston is bullying the villagers to put away Belle's father for believing there is a Beast, Belle brings out the mirror to reveal that the Beast exists. Gaston for once shows cleverness by instantly realizing that Belle cares for the Beast. He in split second shifts from saying there is no beast to urging the villagers to come with him to destroy the Beast which is a threat to them.

Since it is being compared to *The Little Mermaid*, I think it should be noted in *Mermaid* the songs moved the story along and added to the drama. I felt that the opening in *Beauty and the Beast* dragged on for far too long and really told us little about the characters that could not have easily been done without the effort of a production number. (It took a

long time after that slow start for the film to build any momentum.) "Be Our Guest" is a showstopper but really does little to advance the plot, especially moved so much later in the story than it should have been.

Enjoyed the last issue of *Animato*. You are doing a heck of a job and clearly now are the industry trade paper (*Animation Magazine* is almost embarrassing - I should care who made which commercial I will never see?) As a fanzine publisher myself (*The Duckburg Times*) I appreciate the effort needed to produce a new issue. But the joy when it finally is in your hand...

(Thanks for the kind words!)

SOUNDS LIKE...

Judith Reboy
Buffalo, New York

The soundtrack for *The Great Mouse Detective* was released in late April on the Varise Sarabande label, and they did a much better job than Disney's house label usually does! The package contains the 1992 poster art and an insert of cel reproductions. (The only thing missing was a lyric sheet, but that's a minor consideration.)

I also appreciate the care that went into making the music listenable! Rather than chopping off bits and pieces of dialogue that interrupt "The World's Greatest Criminal Mind," they simply left them in and the result flows very smoothly. (I'm reminded of the awful editing at the end of "Daughters of Triton" in the Disney produced *Little Mermaid* soundtrack.) And they included *all* the music. (One of my biggest gripes with the soundtrack for *Oliver and Company* was the omission of the finale music, probably a cost-cutting measure to avoid paying Richard Mulligan and Cheech Marin.)

Unfortunately, the poor distribution of *The Great Mouse Detective* soundtrack (even the Disney stores don't carry it!) and the subsequent release of the *Pinocchio* soundtrack on the house label lead me to believe that they're just dumping on poor Basil again, and that the

high quality was just an unexpected side effect. Oh well, at least I have my video copy to comfort me.

LISTLESS

Robert Knaus

Walpole, Massachusetts

The only complaints I have about *Animato* #22 is the absence of *Darkwing Duck* and *Taz-Mania* from your "favorite cartoon shows" list.

(Well, perhaps you can rectify this omission with your own list submission, hm? Also, you may note that both series are in the new list, albeit low on the list. Just goes to show, you gotta vote.)

SURVEY SAYS!

Beth Thomas

Victor High School
Victor, New York

Enclosed are the top ten theatrical shorts list from my freshman English students. We read excerpts from *Animato* in class and especially enjoy the *Animato* film poll. Thanks for all of your efforts!

(Ah! Once again we corrupt the minds of the young! Muhahahahaha!)

THE SIMPSTONES

Ronald D. Bauerle

Somewhere

How are the Film Poll rankings computed? An average rank for each entry or a count of total #1, #2, etc. votes?

I'm not sure Thelma Scumm (is that her real name?) is being fair to *Tiny Toons* - I don't think their main purpose is to be the world's most satirical cartoon. The original Warner Brothers cartoons weren't either.

Also, maybe *The Simpsons* was satirical at one time but in my opinion they've lost it. Half of the shows lately involve Homer losing and regaining his job or blowing the latest get rich opportunity. *The Flintstones* did all of that thirty years ago (though not necessarily better; it's just that I've seen it before).

(And before that, on *The Honey-mooners*...

As for the Film Poll, your number 1 choice is given 10 points, your number 2 choice 9 points and on down the line. This is why it is important to list your faves in order!)

CLASSIFIED ADS

Classified Ads are free to *Animato* subscribers for the purposes of trading, collecting, or other non-profit venture. For businesses and people wishing to sell things, the cost is a mere 15 cents a word.

WANTED: *Animato* #16 with *Mighty Mouse*/Kricfalusi cover story (even photocopy), new Beany and Cecil episodes, Commercials for MM, B&C, Ren and Stimpy (for trades); Wendy's MM display, ads, cels, etc. Moo. Andrew Schaad, 81 Washington Ave., North Castle, NY 10603.

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN is now offering animation courses and is looking for used equipment, job contacts and technical advice. Please help! Contact Bill McGraw, 4398 Parklawn Drive, Windsor, WI 53598-9788.

WANTED: DISNEY VIDEOS. (VHS preferred); Oliver & Co., Black Cauldron, Fox & Hound, Make Mine Music, Aristocats, *Rescuers*, *Song of South*. Have others to trade. Equally rare. Contact: Gary Fairfax, 4918 Delta River Dr., Lansing, MI 48906, (517) 321-5590 (w); 323-8451 (h)

BACK ISSUES

The following back issues are still available at \$4.00 apiece:

#17: Ralph Bakshi discusses *Mighty Mouse* and *Tattertown*; Chinese animation; *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*; Jack Hannah discusses his days at Walter Lantz; Fleischer's *Superman*;

#21: Interviews with WB background artist Maurice Noble, *Rescuers Down Under* director Mike Gabriel, and Betty Boop creator Grim Natwick; *Tiny Toons* guide; Private Snafu; the Carl Stalling project.

#23: Interviews with *Quasi at the Quackadero* animator Sally Cruikshank, *Beauty and the Beast* director Kirk Wise, Disney animator Walt Peregoy and Fleischer animator Myron Waldman; *Gummi Bears* guide; Bugs on Broadway; *Ren & Stimpy* review.



Upcoming in ANIMATO! #24 ON SALE IN DECEMBER:

Ray Harryhausen..One Frame at a Time!

ANIMATO! will dedicate most of issue 24 to honor the man who received the Gordon Sawyer Memorial Oscar this year for his innovative career in model animation. Noted film historian Scott MacQueen, whose work regularly appears in *AMERICAN CINEMATOGRAPHER*, and illustrator and writer Stephen R. Bissette, (*SWAMP THING*, *TABOO*) have both conducted stunning in-depth interviews with Harryhausen on different aspects of his career. With rare illustrations, the Harryhausen coverage is topped by an original painting by Steve Bissette.

But wait, there's more...No issue of ANIMATO! is complete without our regular columnists, reviews and surprises. Don't delay! Reserve your copy now, or subscribe. A four issue subscription is just \$12.00 for U.S. addresses, and \$16.00 elsewhere! Make your check or money order payable to ANIMATO!, and rush it to 17 Spruce St. Springfield, MA 01105.

Praxinoscope

THE RETURN OF FELIX THE CAT:

The son of the late Joe Oriolo, Don Oriolo, is writing the adventures of legendary cartoon star Felix the Cat for a new series of comic books published by Global Comics, Inc. of Wayne, NJ. The comics are very much in tone with the early '60s television cartoons produced by the elder Oriolo, and feature Rock Bottom, the Professor, Master Cylinder and other characters from the series. The full-color 32-page books should be at your local comic stores now.



STOLEN ANIMATION ART: © Felix the Cat Productions

Animato has received two reports of stolen animation art. The Animation Art Guild released news of a **Lady and the Tramp** limited edition portfolio that was recently stolen from a collector in Illinois by the means of a counterfeit bank cashier's check. Authorities in Hoffman Estates, Illinois are asking animation art collectors and dealers to be aware of the portfolio which contains four limited-edition cels with Disney seals and the number 217/275. Call the Animation Art Guild, Ltd. at 212-765-3030 for more information. Linda Jones Enterprises, Inc. reported a break-in occurred May 18, 1992 at the Chuck Jones Showroom, and two pieces of art were stolen. "Pepe in Flowers" is an oil painting on canvas signed in the lower right hand corner by Chuck Jones. The painting is number CJ-1004 on the back. Also stolen was a bronze limited edition statue featuring the Road Runner and Wile E. Coyote. Its edition number is 12/250. Anyone with information should contact the Newport Beach Police Department at 714-644-3681 (case # 92-07557).

FOX TOONS UP: At a time when NBC is dumping its SatAM fare in favor of live action programming, Fox is headed in the other direction by adding five new shows to its line-up. Under the umbrella of the "Kids' Network," the schedule now includes: **Eek the Cat:** The misadventures of a kind-hearted but unlucky purple

cat who suffers the indignities of a squash and stretch life. His existence is further complicated by his suburban family's two horrible children. The series is the brainchild of director and animator Savage

Steve Holland, whose credits include **Better Off Dead** and HBO's **Encyclopedia Brown**.

Dog City: Created by Jim Henson productions and Nelvana Entertainment, this is the first series to combine animation and Muppets. It is the continuing story of Ace Hart, private nose, who has more to worry about than the fight against evil and corruption that plagues Dog City. Ace is also at the mercy of his canine Muppet

animator, Eliot Shag. Eliot likes to give in to his whims and never lets Ace take the easy way out of in his dogfights against Claws von Fluffe and the membership of F.I.D.O. (Feline International Development Organization). **X-Men:** This long-time favorite of comic book fans finally makes the leap to the small screen. Fox promises that the series will continue the tradition of action-packed stories and complex inter-relationships that have made the X-Men much more than your garden variety superheroes. **Super Dave:** The world's unluckiest daredevil stumbles his way into Saturday morning. Based on the Showtime pay cable series, the "Super One" will appear in live-action wrap-arounds in front of a studio audience of

kids. His animated adventures pit him against a nasty semi-bionic arch-rival named Slash Hazard. **Batman:** The legend of the Dark Knight continues with 65 new episodes from Warner Brothers Animation this fall. In an effort to help us forget the Filmation series from the '70s and Batman's appearances with Scooby-Doo, Warner Brothers is providing

the show with a lush and ornate film noir/art deco design.

CHUCK JONES PROFILED: The August 9, 1992 edition of *The New York Times* ran a feature story on Chuck Jones, who recently created two new cartoon characters which appear in the current movie **Stay Tuned**. Jones was quoted as saying today's television cartoon shows are "nothing but illustrated radio," and added "watch all the Saturday morning shows with the sound turned off. The only ones you'll understand are Bug Bunny and the Disney stuff because the characters all are acting. Turn the sound off for the other shows, and you won't have any idea what's going on. They just talk to each other." God bless him!

COVER TOONS: Ren and Stimpy may not have graced the cover of *Animato* (yet), but they are on the Sept./Oct. edition of *Utne Reader*. The illustration accompanies the cover story on money. *Utne Reader* is highly recommended reading, by the way.

NEW LIMITED EDITION CEL: Toon Art, Inc. has released a limited edition cel featuring many of the memorable MGM stars, including Tom and Jerry and Droopy, entitled "Who's Foolin' Who?" The 16-field art work was done by Marcia Fertig, the first woman to be hired as an animator by Walt Disney. Later in her career, she worked at Hanna-Barbera, and is currently lectures on animation. The only question we have at *Animato* is when will an enterprising company put Barney Bear on a limited edition cel?!



© Turner Broadcasting Systems

FLIPBOOKS

Korkis and Cawley Spill Their Guts

by David Bastian

The line between art and popular culture is a fluid affair. Hard to believe there was once a time when a theater-goer could pay his two bits and see the latest Disney picture, assured that he could enjoy a nice piece of entertainment that had no relation to (let's say "not on speaking terms with") the paintings that were locked up in the dusty ol' museum next door. This was before Salvador Dali and Thomas Hart Benton took jobs at Disney. And Disney in turn invaded the Whitney. Which led to Bugs Bunny invading the Modern, which led to Rocky and Bullwinkle at the Museum of Broadcasting, and *The Art of Hanna-Barbera* for \$50! Times change.

Nowadays it seems that anything can become a "classic" as long as it puts in its time. The Rolling Stones are classic rock. But so are the Bee-Gees. *I Love Lucy* is a classic sitcom. But so is *Welcome Back, Kotter*. So with a baby-boomer market that grew up in the '60s, is it any wonder that *Colonel Bleep* and *Clutch Cargo* are finding green pastures on video alongside "classic" Disney releases? The question is, if you can attend a Christie's auction of animation art, and see Yogi Bear hanging next to Pinocchio, does this blur our definitions of what is Art? Or does it challenge us to consider the fact that we have more than one criterion for placing a value on something?

If it can be said that all works of art have (1) a form, and (2) a content, then it is clear that what we have traditionally referred to as "the art of animation" is seriously lopsided to favor the form: draftsmanship, color, staging, and the grace of the movement that all contribute to the "physiological phenomenon" of the illusion of movement. Only lately has it become evident that animated cartoons that have a stronger cultural history than an artistic foundation can have value to us! Is this more or less a long-winded

way of defining nostalgia? Perhaps.

The one thing that is certain is that mainstream publishers have been slow to realize that animation primarily known for its good form (i.e. Disney) is not the only animation worthy of study. If we waited for the coffee-table art-book publishers to get around to documenting all the studios and characters that have been neglected, we'd be waiting a long time. For this reason, a number of small publishers are striking gold with modest paperbacks on topics that would never get past the receptionist at Abrams.

Sensational titles like *When Dinosaurs Ruled The Screen*, *Monsterland Fear Book*, and *How to Draw Art For Comic Books* are blooming up from the underground and finding an appreciative audience eager to study as adults that which they fed on as children.

Those who love and embrace it call it "Trash Culture." They who would attempt to legitimize it dub it "Popular Culture." They who hate it simply refer to it as "Trash." You can't please everybody.

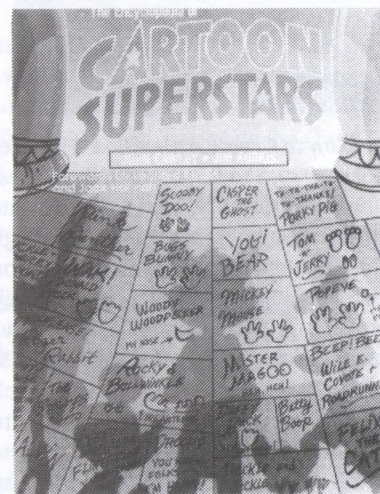
Purists aside, animation fans are as hungry to study the "cultural phenomenon" of cartoons as they are the "physiological phenomenon."

Call it drawing on the left side of the brain: A fascination with: (1) The proliferation of characters that crammed not only Disneyland, but Saturday morning and its resident commercials; (2) The business side of the medium and its obsession with budgets and box-office receipts; (3) The division of labor in the studio where, for example a storyboard artist and a layout artist are two unique and specialized positions, and ultimately; (4) The world of merchandising and the passion for collecting cels, toys and other cartoon memorabilia.

All of these topics get inspected in a series of books by two of the animation industry's most invaluable documentar-

ians. Jim Korkis and John Cawley began conducting interviews, collecting anecdotes, and doing research into the field long before there were enough periodicals on the subject to hold them all. (There still aren't.)

As if they couldn't hold it in anymore lest they explode, they burst forth with five books within the course of two years, and there will undoubtedly be more.

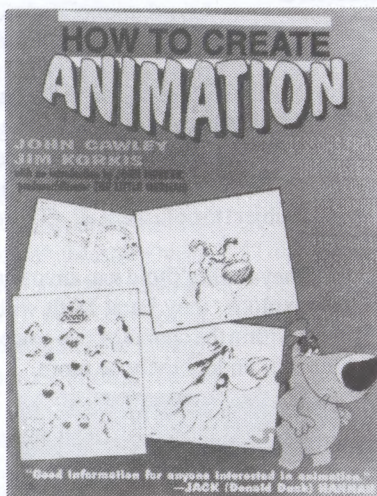


The first book to come out, *The Encyclopedia of Cartoon Superstars* (Pioneer Books, 1990, \$14.95) devotes one chapter each to 25 most famous animated cartoon characters, tracing their origin, developments and eventual spin-off merchandise. It is no accident the cover art depicts them admiring their footprints, beakprints, etc. in the cement of Mann's Chinese theater.

The authors are not so much concerned with "the art of animation," as they are with those particular characters who have attained pop culture status. Equal space is given not only to Mickey, Bugs and Popeye, but also to Scooby-Doo, the Flintstones and the Smurfs! Ironically, the most interesting chapters prove to be the ones on characters who haven't been extensively written about, primarily the TV toons such as Bullwinkle

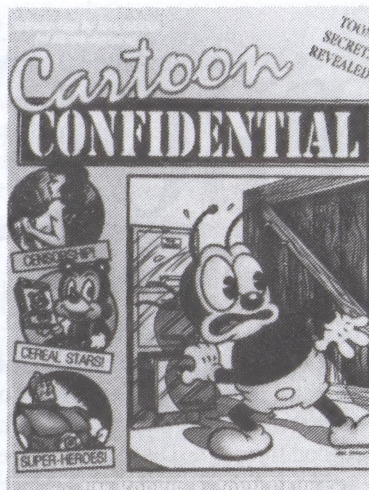
and Alvin the Chipmunk.

Because the authors approach their subjects with an uncritical eye, they appear to love every aspect of every characters they talk about. C'mon guys! Gene Deitch's Tom and Jerry shorts did not "have a quirky style all their own." They sucked! Say it!



How to Create Animation (Pioneer Books, 1990, \$14.95) is arguably the best of the Korkis and Cawley books. Despite its title, it is not a "how to" book, although it does attempt to explain the production process in fourteen whirlwind pages. Skip them and go straight to the interviews which follow. The conversations with 20 professionals ranging from legends such as Bob Clampett and Chuck Jones, to younger toughs such as Glen Keane and Darrell Van Citters give the reader an excellent overview of what it's like to work in the field of animation. In addition to the information they give, the interviewees all share the same excitement for the medium that will inspire anyone who has even a passing interest in animation.

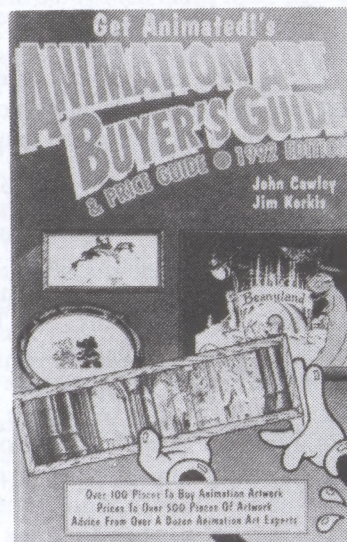
Cartoon Confidential, (Malibu Graphics, 1991, \$14.95) a self-proclaimed collection of "rumors, gossip and secrets" which the authors have uncovered over the years, is destined to fall short of its melodramatic build-up. Yet, it's a fun book filled with human interest stories relating to the animation biz that have either been overlooked or under-appreciated. The 15 chapters run the gamut from the outlandish to the obscure, and look as though they escaped from 15 totally unrelated books. For this reason the reader may do well to take the advice



in the introduction, and skip to the chapters that look interesting.

Korkis and Cawley break new ground on virtually every topic they discuss. Saturday morning super heroes of the Sixties? Cereal box spoke-toons? Animated Christmas specials? Name yer poison! The over-emphasis on TV animated series is likely to put some readers off. For them, the chapter on voice artists who crossed over from radio to cartoons should appease them.

The final chapter lists the animated shorts that have received the Oscar from 1931 to 1990, and relates the Academy's voting process - all of which seems almost out of place in this sugar-coated treasure trove of guilty pleasures.



To say that **Get Animated!'s Animation Art Buyer's Guide and Price Guide - 1992 Edition** (Malibu Graphics, 1992, \$14.95) is more informative than

Cel Magic, the only other book on the subject, is not saying much. It does contain much more useful resources for collectors such as the addresses of appraisers and art restorers, as well as countless galleries that deal in animation art. Fifteen years ago, before the mad scramble to buy low and sell high kicked into gear, this book would have seemed prescient. Today, it only seems opportunistic, as if to say, "Don't be caught winking at the auctioneer without one."

But does any of it really matter? Once the dust settles, the desire on the part of the animation fans to buy and collect cels of their favorite cartoon characters is a phenomenon likely to become one of the most bizarre footnotes in the history of animation. Unlike the average spin-off merchandise like stuffed toys and coloring books, production art has emerged as an elitist pastime. When it gets to the point where Steven Spielberg and Loni Anderson are paddle-whacking each other, sending the prices upward into the hundreds of thousands of dollars, it's almost seems too late for the average, sincere animation fan to get involved.

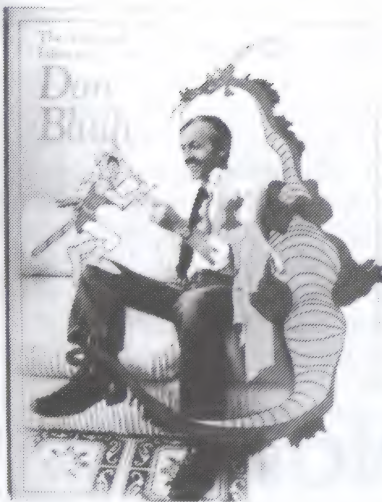
What we really need now is a book that can evaluate the market realistically (as well as aggressively and sarcastically) and cut through the cynicism that is causing dealers to place a dollar value on cels that is much more than they are worth. Instead, Korkis and Cawley arrive too late on the scene with a gentle introductory manual for the newcomer thinking about lining his kid's bedroom with authentic Winnie-the-Pooh art but doesn't know how to go about finding it. If I had the bucks, I'd probably do the same, but because I don't, I'm forced to find comfort in a much more bourgeois activity such as watching the films!

The Animated Films of Don Bluth (Image Publishing, 1992, \$14.95) is their most necessary book. Authored by John Cawley alone (He was Sullivan-Bluth's production coordinator during **An American Tail**), this book concerns itself with a period in the history of animation that is virtually undocumented.

Since the outset, the Bluth saga has been entrenched in controversy, beginning with the now famous 1979 walk-out from the Disney Studio, the publicity from which threatened to overshadow his passion for the art of animation, to his

surprising move to Ireland in 1986 that caused Steven Spielberg to be concerned as to how American **An American Tail** would be. Bluth serves to have his own tale told if for no other reason than to reemphasize his determination to produce quality projects regardless of the personal and financial difficulties.

It is unfortunate that the book's modest size prohibits it from showing off the artwork in the full blazing color that it deserves. Cawley makes up for this by cramming enough facts, figures, box office receipts, reviews, alternate scripts and missing scenes from the films to appease Bluth fans. The only thing missing is the dirt. I'll bet during the animator's strike of 1982, a lot of shit went down on both sides. Cawley is fair, but restrained by his desire to paint an attractive picture of the studio, despite evidence that Bluth allegedly underpaid his employees in the name of Art. When placed among their other books filled with "rumors, gossip and secrets," Cawley's account of Bluth is polite to it subject.



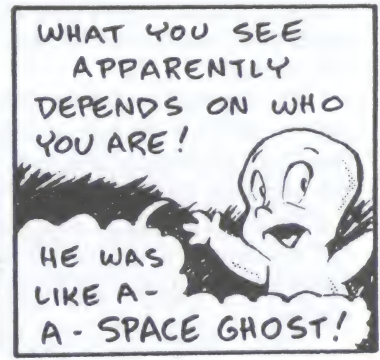
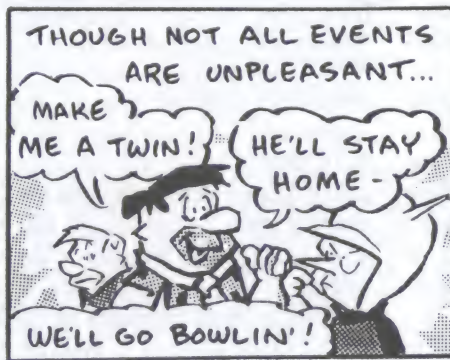
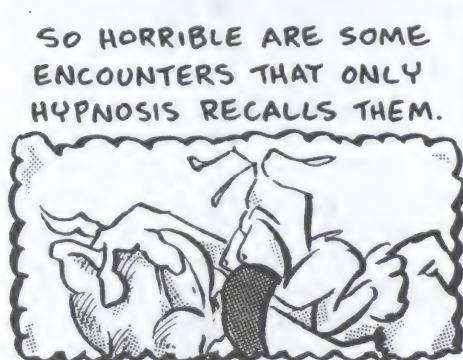
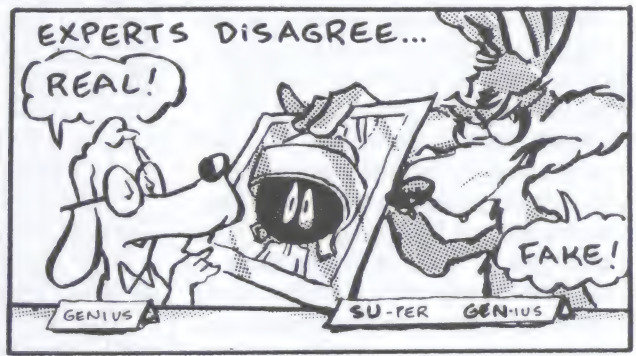
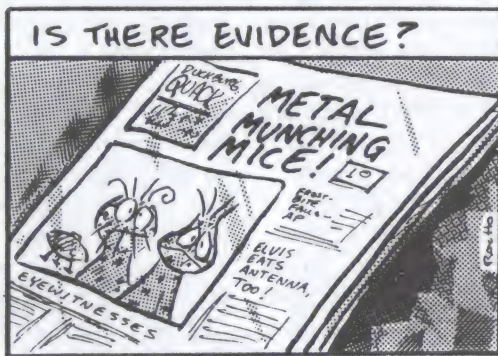
But an even larger issue looms with the timing of this book's arrival. In the final pages, Cawley speculates cautiously about the impending release of **Rock-a-Doodle**, which turned out to be both an artistic and financial disaster. I sincerely

hope the Bluth studio story has a happier ending in their future, but even now, as Disney seems to be somewhat back on track with their own animation department, Bluth (and all non-Disney animation for that matter) looks ahead toward facing his toughest competition yet. The promise of **The Secret of NIMH** is yet unfulfilled.

These five books taken together represent a commendable body of work. Each one of them explores new territory, and, while not exhausting their subjects, opens them up for consideration. Although none of them are flawless, they all contain information you won't find anywhere else. So until any of these topics can break out of the pop culture underground, we are lucky that Korkis and Cawley have found an outlet to express their thoughts.

The only thing left to be added is: small presses such as these tend to print fewer copies of the books than larger publishers, so I mean it whole-heartedly when I say, "Get 'em while they last!"

JAY RATH'S CARTOON PARADE



A Joyful Noise

A Very Incomplete Guide to Toonful Recordings

by Stu Shiffman

I don't pretend to any special expertise on music or classic Hollywood animation. I'm just a fairly typical example of the animation enthusiast of my generation, with a basic education received from those television kid shows in the early 60s where everything from safe and boring formula Terrytoons (with its millions of mice, operatic superhero, and the original odd couples of the crows and Cat and Goose), morally destructive Tom and Jerrys, anarchic Warner characters from Bosko to Bugs, obscure Van Beuren films, to the magical Fleischer cartoons were purveyed by uncle or cousin hosts in between the requisite advertising for the latest marvel from Lionel, Marx or Mattel. Marvels were seen sandwiched in the wee hours of the televised day between Modern Farmer, Colonel Bleep and Sunrise Semester.

This essential grounding was necessary for the later educational rigors of Greg Ford's animation programs at the late lamented Thalia Theater on New York's Upper Westside and Leonard Maltin's course at the New School of Social Research, before his rise to media stardom.

Music, though? I always wanted to find a recording of the amazing Carl Stalling omni-referential arrangements.

If there could be so many recordings of the over-orchestrated Disney stuff, film scores by every Miklos, Alfred and Wolfgang, when Peter Schickele's recent performance of P.D.Q. Bach's *Fantasieschtick* quoted the Woody Woodpecker theme, then why not the mighty Carl, who sometimes made Spike Jones seem staid and the Beatles boring? So now we finally have two recordings in which Carl Stalling and Milt Franklyn are recognized as post-modernist as heck, and well before the term was coined.

By this time, I expect that readers of *Animato!* have caught onto the existence of *Bugs Bunny on Broadway*, (whose Broadway Premiere was well described in issue #22), and *The Carl Stalling Project*. The latter is the latest in the fascinating projects of producer Hal Willner, which included *Lost in the Stars*, (Kurt Weill works as done by a varied selection of modern rockers and stylists), and the way-cool *Stay Awake* (A&M SP 3918, 1988), which did the same with classic Disney songs thus making them exciting again for me for the first time since age eight. As an aside, it was very strange to simply contemplate Sun Ra attempting "Pink Elephants on Parade", much less actually hear it! With *The Carl Stalling Project*, Willner is content to let the music speak for itself without

reinterpretation by new artists. Its excellent notes and package make a wonderful whole, including one of the only CD long-boxes that I will never recycle.

Boop-Boop-De-Boop, Betty Boop (ProArte CDD 440, 1989) provides a mix of original tracks from the films of La Boop, contemporary recordings of songs used in some of the classics (i.e. "Minnie the Moocher," "Old Man of the Mountain," "St. James Infirmary Blues"), and covers by bands of the period. There are no notes included, cover art is elementary, and the recording quality varies. Still, it's nice to have.

Its more recent companion recording is *Toons From the Toons* (ProArte CDD3400, 1991). The cover features an illustration of generic funny-animals in party-mode, and I almost expected the cartoon music equivalent of the "Switched-on Classics," with disco-boogie beat added to Sammy Timberg or Raymond Scott compositions. No fear of that on this interesting mix of selections. Once again, there is the mix of original cartoon tracks, radio show recordings, covers, and pop-culture assimilations of the characters. Glenn Miller and His Orchestra does "Faithful Forever" from the Fleischer *Gulliver's Travels*. Ben Bernie & His Orchestra reflect the audience disappointment in "What, No



Mickey Mouse!" Popular Warner motif "Powerhouse" is interpreted by its creator, Raymond Scott. The other selections are equally interesting. The accompanying three pages of notes provide a good survey of the material. The best news is that the sound quality is much improved over that of the Betty Boop collection. [Editor's note: While at Warner Brothers, Carl Stalling used several compositions by contemporary composer Raymond Scott. "Powerhouse," is the wonderfully mechanical selection which accompanied many assembly line scenes.]

At this point, what do you do? You search for the obscure collections of Raymond Scott recording (hurray for the CD revolution, which has made many stores and recording companies eliminate their LPs or backlist. May they grow in the ground like a carrot, with their head in the ground and their feet in the air) in collector record stores and the catalog of mail order companies. You cherish your finds of isolated covers of cartoons' themes.

The outside world may know Harold Arlen for his "Stormy Weather" and other classic standards. Animation fans will be more familiar, perhaps, with "I Love To Singa" which was featured in the Warner Brothers cartoon of the same name (1936, directed by Tex Avery). The young "Owl" Jolson yearns to "singa about the Moon-a and the June-a and the Spring-a" in a plot that pastiches *The Jazz Singer*. Fans will appreciate "I Love to Singa!": *The Other Songs of Harold Arlen* (Jass Records JASS 7, 1986), featuring cover art inspired by the Warner film by cartoonist/animation fan Milton Knight (late of the funny-animal comics Hugo and Midnight) and the Cab Calloway version of the title song leading the collected tracks. Among the extended quotes on the sleeve back is one from the British Wire by Will Friedwald, co-author with Jerry Beck of *Looney Tunes And Merrie Melodies*.

Dare to Be Stupid (CBS FN 40033, 1985) by "Weird Al" Yankovic has a very nice energetic cover of the Allman/Worth theme song from Jay Ward's *George of the Jungle*. The other silly songs and parodies just add to the joy.

Leon Redbone: On the Track (Warner BS 2888, 1975) sports a Chuck

Jones sleeve illustration of Michigan J. Frog cakewalking in front of an oncoming locomotive, all framed inside a Warner rainbow circle. This recording contains many standards which Thirties animation fans are bound to recognize.

You've seen and heard the other collections of TV themes, often with not-quite-right covers of cartoon themes. Now it's time for *Rerun Rock Presents: Superstars Sing Television Themes* (Rhino RI 70199, 1989), in which celebrity imitators render what-if versions of Sinatra on "The Addams Family" ("Who loves ya, Pugsley?"), Michael Jackson doing "Rawhide," and Bob Dylan's "Patty Duke Show." Animation fans will find the fascinating cognitive dissonance of the Elvis Presley's "Casper the Friendly Ghost," the Cars on the "Yogi Bear" song, "George of the Jungle" a la Led Zeppelin, and (my favorite) "(Meet) The Flintstones" as done by Bruce Springsteen.

The music from the Fleischer cartoons is fascinating: a wonderful mix of contemporary rhythm from African-American artists like Calloway, the Tin Pan Alley tradition that Sammy Timberg came from; and the Jewish-tinged jazz and swing. While the animation fans were rediscovering our film heritage in the 1970s, Jewish musicians were doing the same in the great klezmer revival. Klezmer is an Eastern European Jewish folk-jazz, a musical Yiddish vernacular and original Old World Beat. Ensembles like the Berkeley-based Klezmerim, the Bostonian Klezmer Conservatory Band, and the New York bands Kapelye (led by scholar-musician Henry Sapoznik) and Andy Statman Klezmer Orchestra (led by composer and mandolin virtuoso Statman) rejuvenated an almost extinct tradition. They now embrace all of the Yiddish musics, adding songs from Yiddish musical theatre and political movements and Jewish-tinged jazz and sing to the older forms of klezmer.

Animation fans should investigate two recordings by the Klezmerim, *Notes From the Underground* (Flying Fish FF322, 1984) and *Jazz-Babies From the Ukraine* (Flying Fish FF465, 1987). The former is priceless for its "Gangsters in Toyland" sequence, with tracks of "Betty Boop," "Gangsters in Toyland" and "Sirba Slanic," as well as for covers of "Egyp-

tian-Ella," Ellington's "The Mooche," and "Yiddisher Charleston." *Jazz-Babies*, recorded live in Amsterdam, features comedic frames worthy of Firesign Theatre or the Flying Karamazov Brothers, and hot renditions of "Minnie the Moocher," "Bulgarian Boogie" and wild klezmer madness.

I keep imagining a film documentary on the Fleischers and their studio. The soundtrack would have Andy Statman's "Flatbush Waltz" (Rounder 0116, 1980) for their early years, and "Vi Bistu Gevezn far Prohibition" (Where were you before Prohibition?) from Kapelye: *Levine & His Flying Machine* (Shanachie 21006, 1985). For their career peak, there would be "Shtille Bulgar/ Frailach in Swing" a la Ziggy Elman from *The Original Klezmer Jazz Band* (MEN 6000). The final Florida studio sequence would feature "Miami Beach Rumba" by Judy Bressler and the Klezmer Conservatory Band from *A Touch of Klez!* (Vanguard VSD 79455, 1985).

[Besides these recordings there were two soundtrack albums from the two compilation Fleischer features produced by Sidney Tager in the mid-Seventies.

BETTY BOOP: ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE CARTOON SOUNDTRACK (Mark 56 Records, 1973) has cuts featuring Cab Calloway, Don Redman and Louis Armstrong. **BETTY BOOP SCANDALS OF 1974** (Mark 56 Records, 1974) features more tracks from early Boop shorts. Both records are long out of print but are worth the search.

If you're a musician and want to record your own cover, be aware the sheet music of many toon songs, especially features, were printed. I can't imagine families gathering around the piano in the parlor to belt out the Popeye theme, but thank goodness someone at Famous Music had that vision! These can be found at paper memorabilia shows and antique shops.

I vividly remember a recording of Woody Woodpecker's theme song performed by a big band as a occasional offering on radio thirty years ago. Any idea who recorded that? M.D.]

Hey There, It's Yogi Bear!

by Tim Smith

Most of the great animation studios seem to have that one signature character who, through just the right combination of talent, timing and tradition, manages to evolve into the reverent position of "studio icon." In considering the greatest cartoon studios of the theatrical era, there can be no questioning the role of Mickey Mouse as the Disney symbol or Bugs Bunny as the kingpin at Warners. Tom and Jerry mutually use the seven Academy Awards on their mantle to hold up the MGM banner, while Mighty Mouse and Woody Woodpecker respectively serve Terrytoons and Walter Lantz.

During the second half of the twentieth century however, the influence of the new medium of television necessitated the changing of a lot more than just the channels. Except for Disney, all of the revered studios of animation's golden age eventually ceased operations. Some others, however, saw the inevitability of television's impact as a motivating challenge to deal with, rather than a morbid change to die with.

And nobody dealt more adeptly with the changing world of television than Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera. When MGM wouldn't buy their "limited animation" concept they simply went out and started their own studio. In terms of establishing a permeating dominance of the television airwaves, they really did get so far ahead, so fast, that it's impossible to even consider TV animation without Hanna-Barbera. The air of permanence surrounding their name is probably more real than imagined.

With all the disquieting changes that television forced upon the animated world, it was perhaps comforting to realize that not everything would change. TV studios also had their icons, and the ingenuity exhibited by Hanna and Barbera was certainly reflected in the character

that has come to symbolize their studio, Yogi Bear. More than living up to his own claim, Yogi has proved to be not only smarter, but also a lot more durable than the average bear.

Excluding the repackaging of exist-

that was actually responsible for Hanna-Barbera's creation, it was only appropriate that the studio would draw upon that medium for many of its early influences. The relationship between Fred and Barney on *The Flintstones* in many ways parodied Ralph and Norton on *The Honeymooners*, and *Top Cat* no doubt learned many of his cons from the conniving Sergeant Bilko on *The Phil Silvers Show*.

The derivation of Yogi's character might best be described as a "Honeymooners' combo." In terms of a lead character recruiting his loyal sidekick to aid and abet his constant attempts to improve his lot in life, Yogi is much like Ralph Kramden. On the other hand, his rhythmic voice and unflappable attitude strongly resemble Ralph's sewer-working sidekick Ed Norton. Also reminiscent of Norton is the up-turned brim on the porkpie hat which accompanies Yogi's white collar and green tie.

According to Joe Barbera, the various names considered for the character included Yo-Yo Bear, Yucca Bear, and Huckleberry Bear, as well as Yogi. Barbera also contends that the Yogi moniker had nothing to do with the popular New York Yankees catcher of the era, Yogi Berra. Despite this

contention, the auditory appeal of the cartoon name certainly played upon the already-established ring of the baseball name. Many years after the fact, with both of these Yogi "characters" still appearing on tv with regularity, it would be interesting to see how many American viewers would even know who came first! Probably not many.

Yogi Bear's television debut occurred on October 2, 1958. Originally Yogi shared his airtime with Huckleberry Hound and Pixie, Dixie, and Mr. Jinx, and appeared as the final segment of the half-hour *Huckleberry Hound Show*. A couple years later Yogi became the star of



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ing shows, and the half dozen movies and specials in which Yogi has been featured, the omnipresent bear has appeared in no less than nine different television incarnations. This total includes Yogi's three dimensional debut in *Yo, Yogi!*, the current NBC series.

One of Yogi's recurring goals in the original shorts was to escape the restraining confines of Jellystone Park. If he only knew then that his future exploits would be taking him around the world and even throughout space, perhaps he might have been more content to enjoy his placid park existence while it lasted.

Since it was the television medium

his own show and the rest is entertainment history. Beginning with those original short cartoons, here is a show-by-show summary of Yogi's illustrious television career.

YOGI BEAR (original short cartoons) syndicated 1958-63 **RATING:** 4 picnic baskets

Once upon a time there existed a kingdom of animals in which bears were timid woodland creatures roaming freely in the forest, rather than flying around on ecological arks or chilling out at modern megamalls. Yogi Bear began his career as just such an animal and, believe it or not, despite the lack of a nearby food court, the acquisition of fast food was never much of a problem for the cagey bruin. Nature's order was as it should be.

Picturesque Jellystone Park was the perfect place to experience all of nature's many wonders. After a winter's hibernation, usually a hard-earned one, Yogi could rise to face life's challenges with camaraderie, compassion, and confidence. He had his faithful sidekick Boo Boo to provide the camaraderie, and the lovely Cindy Bear to occasionally spark his compassion. And if there was one fact in which a disobedient bear could be confident, it was the knowledge that the persistent Ranger Smith was never far behind.

The three most recurring themes in the series were Yogi's quests for food, sleep, and a way to escape from the park. Pilfering picnic baskets and leaving park grounds constituted rule violations of a magnitude sufficient to insure the immediate intervention of Ranger Smith. The constant interruption of Yogi's hibernation attempts, however, usually emanated from other sources. Ranger Smith was no fool. He looked at Yogi's hibernation like a school teacher looks at summer vacation. The correlation between his anxiety level and Yogi's metabolism was all too obvious.

Yogi's original series was also his longest running. Yogi's own show, which was awarded to him in 1961, ran through 1963. And sentimentality totally aside, the original series is still the greatest Yogi of all. Veteran Warner Brothers storymen Warren Foster and Mike Maltese provided superb scripts, and as opposed to every subsequent series in which Yogi

has appeared, **The Yogi Bear Show** was targeted for an early evening, rather than a Saturday morning, time slot. The level of adult humor in the original series attests to this fact.

During the series' five-year run there were only a few significant developments in the basics of the show. Physically, Yogi looks a little different in the beginning episodes. Originally, the lighter brown color always seen on his nose and muzzle was also seen on his face and surrounding his eyes. But by the time the first season was half way through, Yogi's appearance had been permanently established.

The character of Ranger Smith was not solidified until the second season. During the first year, there are a number of different rangers. Some sound like Smith, some look like Smith, and some are called Smith; but voice, appearance, and name did not converge into a single entity until the second year.

Yogi was voiced by the versatile Daws Butler who filled the role from its inception until his death in 1988. Butler was also the voice of dozens of other Hanna-Barbera stars including Huckleberry Hound, Quick Draw McGraw, Snagglepuss, Elroy Jetson, and Barney Rubble. Don Messick voiced Ranger Smith and Boo Boo, whose most famous line was probably the often uttered and always ignored warning, "The Ranger isn't going to like this, Yogi..." The drawl of Southern belle Cindy Bear ("Ah do declare!") was contributed by Julie Bennett.

Despite Cindy's sexy voice, and short mini-skirt, Yogi was often a reluctant romantic. In "Woo'in Bruin," rival Bruno Bear takes advantage of Yogi's lackadaisical attitude and tries to move in on Cindy. Concerned, Boo Boo brings this situation to the attention of an overconfident Yogi who boasts that all he has to do is whistle and Cindy will come a-runnin'. When Cindy, who is being literally waltzed around the park by the charming Bruno, does not react to Yogi's signal, the defeat is acknowledged by his straightman sidekick. "Yogi, she's not a-runnin'," deadpans Boo Boo, "she's a-dancin'."

Yogi stows away in a camper and is transported away from the park in "Yogi in the City". Out of place in the unfamiliar urban environment, Yogi soon finds

himself in rapid flight from a "city-type Ranger." In his not-so-valiant attempt to elude capture, the panicky park bear ends up stranding himself on a skyscraper ledge that's as narrow as it is high. An admitted acrophobic, Yogi's desperate plight is soon being witnessed by a growing crowd of curiosity seekers, as well as a home television audience.

The adult element of the show definitely creeps into this episode. There's a heavy dose of black humor as a carnival type atmosphere begins to permeate the crowd waiting for Yogi to jump. One opportunistic street vendor is even hawking Yogi dolls. "Get your souvenir bears!" he cries, finishing the offer with the advice to, "Get 'em before he jumps!" The suggestion, apparently, is that if Yogi splatters himself on the pavement, the occasion might somehow be more enjoyable if the onlookers have pre-purchased their memento of the colorful event.

Of course it all works out alright in the end. Ranger Smith, when you got right down to it, was as much Yogi's ally as his adversary. Seeing Yogi's predicament on the tv news bulletin, he hops into his helicopter and effects the rescue. Despite Yogi's constant threat to his authority, Ranger Smith always dealt with the rebellious bear in a fashion that somehow combined anger and affection.

And in turn, Yogi's treatment of Ranger Smith was not always antagonistic. At times he even went out of his way to calm the Ranger's ragged nerves. After one disquieting confrontation Smith scolds the bear, saying, "You seem to think you own this park, Yogi." "Why Mr. Ranger sir," consoles Yogi, "I never even considered such a purchase!"

YOGI'S GANG ABC 1973-75
RATING: 2 picnic baskets

At an industry convention in the early '70s, Joe Barbera, in reference to new standards which were being imposed on children's television, mentioned that he longed for the old days when you could have a cat chase a mouse and not have to have him stop half way through the pursuit and teach the mouse how to blow glass or weave a basket.

In terms of Yogi, that trend in animation was most epitomized by Yogi's Gang, a weekly cartoon lesson in environmental and social concerns.



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The series debuted in 1973 marking Yogi's network debut and returning him to the small screen for the first time in a decade. It also initiated a concept which Hanna-Barbera has continued to this very day, that of reuniting various combinations of the studio's early stars, and implanting them in a variety of settings and situations.

The "gang" in this series consisted of Huckleberry Hound, Snagglepuss, Quick Draw McGraw, Peter Potamus, Wally Gator, Magilla Gorilla and more than ten other H-B characters. Because of the large cast, not everyone made it into every episode. If a particular story seemed in need of eight-armed assistance, you knew Squiddly Diddly would soon slither onto the scene, but in most episodes the mollusk never made it out of his dressing tank.

Captain Yogi led his gang all over the world, traveling in the "Ark Lark," a large dirigible-like vessel. Granted, it was hard to park, but because it was powered by a Magilla-driven treadmill, rather than traditional fuel, there was little risk of explosion.

During their global trek, the ark's crew fought apathy about ecological and social concerns. One unique element of the series was that, in a style not dissimi-

lar to Batman, each episode featured a distinctly different "guest villain." Mr. Bigot, Mr. Waste, and the Greedy Genie each personified their own individual brand of treachery. Of course Mr. Prankster was not quite as intimidating as the Joker, and Lotta Litter's bag lady outfit couldn't come close to Catwoman's costume but, on the other hand, Boo Boo was a much more lovable sidekick than Robin.

SCOOBY'S ALL-STAR LAFF-A-LYMPICS ABC 1977-80 RATING: 2 picnic baskets

The concept of a mass reunion of Hanna-Barbera characters, in terms of sheer numbers, was never executed on a larger scale than it was in the *Laff-a-Lympics*. About 50 H-B stars participated in the contests which were inspired by the popularity of the 1976 Olympics. The format of the broadcasts parodied ABC's *Wide World of Sports* with well known announcers, Snagglepuss and Mildew Wolf, spanning the globe to cover a wide variety of athletic competition.

There were three teams vying for the coveted gold medallion which went to the first place finishers. Yogi's team, the Yogi Yahooeys, were outfitted in red uniforms. In the blue uniforms were the Scooby Doobies, and the Really Rottens

wore green. Yogi's roster consisted mainly of the early H-B characters, Scooby had the later day H-B good guys, and the Rottens were led by Dread Baron (a Dick Dastardly clone with a Snidely Whiplash voice) and Mumbley (a Muttley clone with a Muttley snicker).

Each half hour episode consisted of four events held at two different sites. Points were allotted for first, second, and third place finishes, but questionable tactics were occasionally subject to review by instant replay, and scoring adjustments were possible. Such attempts to skirt the rules were usually perpetrated by the Really Rottens, but both other teams were also penalized on occasion, and in an unusual twist that added an element of excitement to the show, all three teams were capable of winning.

In many episodes Yogi appeared only as a cheerleader, but that was true of everyone in the show. The cast was so huge that the available air time had to be split many ways. Yogi did, however, perform impressively when called upon to compete. One episode was rather unique in that it expanded the setting of the show to outer space with a rocket race to the moon. Yogi piloted his craft to a first place tie but the victory may have been an ominously portentous one. The

fact that he performed so well in space may been a contributing factor to Yogi's involvement in his next two series, undoubtedly the perigee of his career.

YOGI'S SPACE RACE NBC 1978-79 RATING: 1 picnic basket

The *Star Wars* mania that swept the country in the late '70s also had an inevitable impact on the world of animation. Hanna-Barbera, never missing the opportunity to hop on a passing bandwagon, joined the craze with *Yogi's Space Race*.

For the first time, Yogi was given a new sidekick in the form of co-pilot Scarebear. Yogi's cowardly companion was most notable for his frizzy hair and frazzled nerves. The other teams of racers were filled out by a variety of old and new H-B characters.

The villainy in the show was provided by the Phantom Phink and his dog Sludge, kind of a Dastardly and Muttley pair. The evil duo also had the capability of transforming themselves into Captain Good and Clean Cat in order to further confuse their inept competition which was somehow incapable of discerning the scam.

At stake in each weekly contest was an exotic vacation in some far flung corner of the solar system. Phantom Phink and Sludge actually won a disproportionate number of the races, but since the vacation prizes always backfired, in one way or another, evil never really triumphed.

GALAXY GOOF-UPS NBC 1978-79 RATING: 1 picnic basket

If a half hour of *Space Race* still left you yearning for more Yogi, then 1978 was a great year to be alive. Appearing that same season as the leader of a bumbling team of intergalactic crime busters on *Galaxy Goof-Ups*, Yogi Bear may have been the only cartoon character in network TB history to star simultaneously in two different series. This, of course, would have been a more impressive accomplishment if both series hadn't been so undistinguished.

The *Galaxy Goof-Ups* actually began as a segment within *Yogi's Space Race*, the later being an umbrella title for a ninety minute show which included both series. The *Goof-Ups* consisted of Yogi, Huckleberry Hound, and two char-

acters from *Space Race*, Scarebear and Quack-Up.

Quack-Up, voiced by Mel Blanc, sounded like a cross between two of his duck predecessors, Daffy and Donald. He also had a unique appearance. With goggles that looked like thick glasses, and a buck tooth protruding from his upper bill, Quack-Up vaguely resembled some of the oriental caricatures popular in cartoons during the second World War.

The worst part of the series was that, in addition to the *Star Wars* influence, *Galaxy Goof-Ups* also suffered from "Saturday Night Fever." Forced into the plot of every episode was one hideous disco scene, complete with strobe lights, mirror balls, and other ghastly limited animation effects. But perhaps we're being too harsh. After all, figuring out how to incorporate musical material like "Disco Cowboy, Disco Down" into a sci-fi Yogi cartoon had to be one of the great all-time challenges in animation!

YOGI'S TREASURE HUNT Syndicated 1985-88 RATING: 3 picnic baskets

Yogi's Treasure Hunt was the Hanna-Barbera series that, more than any other to date, finally began to realize some of the potential lurking in the studio's vast archive of characters. Of all the ensemble cast attempts, previous and subsequent, this series was the best conceived. The characters were well used, the scripts were more interesting, and the animation had a greater depth and richer colors.

Yogi, with park buddies Boo Boo and Ranger Smith in tow, was the captain of a crew of ten treasure hunters who traveled in the S.S. Jelly Roger. This all-purpose vessel was a vintage Spanish galleon, especially equipped with inflatable dual hot air balloons for those times when sea travel just wasn't practical.

The casting in the show definitely contributed to its appeal. The seven other characters joining the Jellystone trio were Huckleberry Hound, Snagglepuss, Quick Draw McGraw, Snooper and Blabber, and Augie Doggie and Doggie Daddy. Dick Dastardly and Muttley were always the villains so their inclusion would bring the cast to a dirty dozen, and you could actually make it a lucky thirteen if you included Top Cat.

In this series the slick feline was a Charlie's Angels-type boss, calling in the clues and directions, but never personally leaving the ski slopes, pool sides, or broadcast booths from which he called the shots. Other characters from the Hanna-Barbera stable were also occasionally utilized when appropriate situations arose.

In comparison to the earlier ensemble shows, *Treasure Hunt* had a more clearly defined central cast than *Yogi's Gang*, and a more interesting and appealing cast than either *Space Race* or *Goof-Ups*. The possibility that the studio might someday do something better remains an enticing one, but to this date, for the generation of Americans that grew up with them, this is the most fun available with the original wave of Hanna-Barbera characters.

One aspect of this series that helped to set it above the other spinoffs was the creative references to television, movies, commercials, animation history, and real life personalities. More than any other Yogi series, and perhaps more than any other series in the studio's history, Hanna-Barbera aggressively and successfully made use of a variety of topical elements.

Celebrity caricatures had always been an integral ingredient in the formula of the classic Warner Brothers cartoons. Hanna-Barbera, while having based previous series on current societal themes, had heretofore avoided attempts to caricature actual people. Everyone from Ronald Reagan to Dr. Ruth to Barbara Walters appeared on *Treasure Hunt* and the inclusion of these personalities certainly added ammunition to the show's comedy arsenal.

One of the series' best episodes, "Yogi Bear on the Air" begins as a *Twilight Zone* parody and then evolves into separate spoofs of almost ten different TV shows, ranging from *Hill Street Blues* to *General Hospital* to *Star Trek*. Not since John Belushi's *Saturday Night Live* skits have we seen Captain Kirk portrayed so brilliantly!

Treasure Hunt, like many previous cartoons, also adapted the classic tale of "Jack and the Beanstalk." As with the Warners version of this one, the heroes end up "under glass" as the giant's captives. In Warners, the ingenious Bugs uses his handy glass cutter to effect an escape. But this kind of superfluous

hardware would prove unnecessary for Yogi's resourceful crew. After waiting over twenty years for an opportunity to turn his vitriolic voice into a virtue, Huckleberry Hound saves the day by merely breaking into a verse of his signature tune "Clementine," and immediately shattering the glass. Before escaping however, Huck leaves the audience pondering the question, "Was it live, or was it Huckleberry?"

After the initial wave of Hanna-Barbera success, it was probably to be expected that the studio would consistently return to its own roots for material. Not till **Treasure Hunt**, however, was there an aggressive attempt to take comical advantage of cartoon references outside the studio. Especially for animation buffs, it was an uncharted territory worthy of exploration.

They salute Jay Ward in one episode, where the crew's ship is about to plunge over Frostbite Falls. Another episode begins with an unlikely pair of doctors, Ricochet Rabbit and Ma Rugg, revealing their latest discovery. Skeptical Yogi asks, "...at the risk of stealing, a line most appealing,.....What's up, Docs?" Of course Bugs' line has already been stolen on previous occasions too numerous to mention, but here it's the outright acknowledgement of the theft, delivered in Yogi's own signature rhyme, that makes the allusion work.

Another vintage animation reference is particularly appealing because it pays tribute to the legendary Tex Avery, a former co-worker, and friendly rival, of Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera during the golden era at MGM. Avery actually finished his career working for Hanna-Barbera in 1980, but this reference deservedly flashes back to the MGM glory days. In "Yogi and the Unicorn," an episode featuring a number of fairy tale parodies, the Little Red Riding Hood character strolls in and purrs with the exact same voice as Red Hot Riding Hood, the sexy star of Avery's most renowned series of cartoons at MGM.

Of course the animation references included lots of early Hanna-Barbera, but there was also a refreshing difference. For the first time, H-B cartoons were given the liberty to ridicule and satirize their own studio. In one episode Dastardly and Muttley manage to abduct sev-

eral of the treasure hunters for the purpose of extracting valuable information. The evil duo devise a most lethal means of torture to achieve their goal. Yogi and pals are exposed to an unending, high volume, musical rendition of "Stop That Pigeon," which was the theme song to Dastardly and Muttley's own show which aired during the 1969-70 season.

In the aforementioned "Yogi Bear on the Air," the final television parody victimizes **The Smurfs**. A delightfully wicked spell casts Dastardly and Muttley as leads in a new version called **The Smirks**. The usually belligerent bad boys look simply wonderful in their blue tights and caps as they skip and frolic off into the woods with Dastardly singing and Muttley snickering the Smurfs' theme song!

YOGI BEAR (new shorts) syndicated 1988-89 **RATING:** 2 picnic baskets

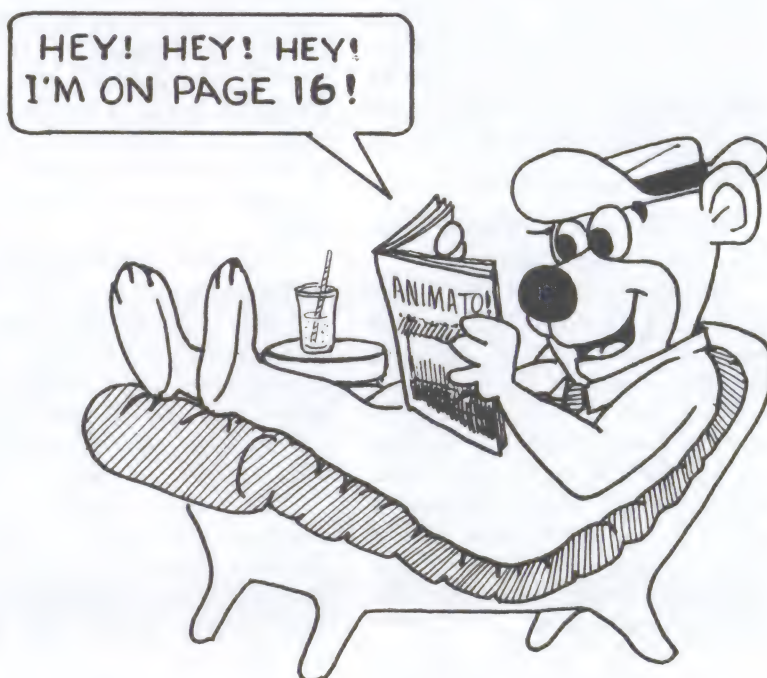
In 1988 Hanna-Barbera, in order to fill out a package for syndication, returned Yogi to Jellystone Park and attempted to resurrect the original series.

Forty-five new Yogi shorts were created and they remained faithful, for the most part, to the formula of the original series.

One new character was added to the cast. In a futile attempt to improve Ranger Smith's odds of successfully dealing with Yogi, he was provided with an assistant ranger, Rooby Doo. The name must have originated in the Hanna-Barbera kennel when someone heard Astro calling Scooby. In terms of voice and stature, Rooby Doo resembled a human version of Benny the Ball from **Top Cat**.

Greg Burson replaced Daws Butler as the voice of Yogi, and did a respectable job, but the new episodes did not, for the most part, compare favorably with the originals. Some differences in the television standards from three decades earlier were noticeable, but Yogi probably didn't even miss the irate park visitors constantly clanging his head with frying pans.

There was also a concerted effort to be topical. Some episodes were based on hit movies of the time such as **La Bamba**, **Top Gun**, and **Terminator**, and others revolved around popular fads such as skateboard competitions and visiting



© Turner Broadcasting Systems

Chinese panda bears. Ironically, some of these episodes already seem more dated than the originals.

FENDER BENDER 500 Syndicated / Disney 1990-92 RATING: 2 picnic baskets

Having previously competed in various contests ranging from mock Olympics to space races, Yogi, the ultimate competitor, was a natural for the **Fender Bender 500**. This series appeared within the syndicated **Wake, Rattle, & Roll** show and featured races in 4 X 4 vehicles driven by ten pairs of classic Hanna-Barbera characters.

There was a definite "truck pull" mentality to the series, and all of the racers had macho names for their vehicles. Yogi drove the "Jellystone Jammer" and the rest of the field consisted of mostly the same characters who had been recycled in **Yogi's Gang** and **Treasure Hunt** including villains Dastardly and Muttley in the "Dirty Truckster."

The one rather unusual inclusion in the field of characters was Winsome Witch, appearing in a regular series for the first time since **The Atom Ant / Secret Squirrel Show** in 1967. Along with her black cat Lucky, Winnie was at the wheel of the "Sonic Broom."

The races took place at different sites around the world, and there seemed to be a bit of a home court advantage to some episodes. Top Cat, assisted by just Chooch from the old gang, won "The Big Apple 500" with some assistance from surprise guest Officer Dibble, and Wally Gator and Magilla Gorilla, in the "Swamp Stomper," won "The Bayou 500."

In 1991 the Disney Channel picked up the series and changed the title to **Jump, Rattle, & Roll** in order to suit an afternoon time slot. The series featured a live action host, in the person of a junior high aged kid named Sam, and combined music, skits, and comedy with short cartoons.

Because of the format of the show, the Fender Bender cartoons were really short, coming in at about five minutes each. It wasn't enough time to develop much of a story, so most of the episodes relied on a series of spot gags leading to an exciting down-to-the-wire finish. The series' greatest appeal was its reliance upon the classic H-B characters and the



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brevity of the format. Because it was never intended as an ambitious concept, there weren't many unmet expectations.

YO, YOGI! NBC 1991-92 RATING: 1 picnic basket

If the concept of "junior versions" of already established characters doesn't give you a queasy feeling, then you've never seen it attempted before. And **Yo, Yogi!** won't do much to settle your stomach.

The setting is Jellystone Mall and the lead characters are teen versions of Yogi, Boo Boo, Huck, Snag, and Cindy. The group solves mysteries and thwarts crime, occasionally assisted by Officer Smith. They might have told him it was a transfer but I think a move from park ranger to mall security guard has to be considered a demotion, no matter how you cut it.

One strange aspect of the show's youthful concept is that only some of the characters were allowed to take that magi-

cal dip in the fountain of youth. A variety of other H-B stars appear in their original form, so either way you look at it, half of the characters are anachronisms.

These other "adult" characters appear in roles based on either name or personality. "Magilla Ice" appears as a trendy rap star. The Frenchman Loopy De Loop is a chef at the food court, Snooper and Blabber return as detectives, and there's even some contemporary political satire as Shyster Hokey Wolf serves as the Mayor.

Halfway through the first season **Yo, Yogi!** began incorporating a 3-D segment into each show. Whenever Yogi spun his cap around, it was everyone's cue to grab the special glasses out of the Rice Krispies box and prepare for an exciting chase scene which was guaranteed to last a minute or less. The concept was an admirable effort, but in the case of **Yo, Yogi!**, two dimensions were probably already too many.

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The "Toon Age" is Here!

Turner Broadcasting Launches a 24 hour Cartoon Channel

by G. Michael Dobbs

Here's a riddle. . . Let's say you're a television programming exec, and you notice the highest levels of television usage for children ages two through 11 are between 8:00 and 11:00 p.m., but you run your cartoon programming in the morning and in the 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. timeslot. What can you do to get both kids and adults to watch?

Well, if you were Ted Turner and his staff at Turner Broadcasting Systems, you'd buy the broadcast rights to a number of classic cartoons, and purchase lock, stock and inkwell the libraries of two studios. Then you'd develop a basic cable service which will hook misty-eyed adults and animation fans who'd find it difficult to see these cartoons elsewhere. Oh yes, and kids will watch, too.

Welcome to the Cartoon Network, which will debut on cable systems throughout the country on Oct. 1, 1992. Betty Cohen, Executive Vice President of the Cartoon Network, doesn't see the channel as another kids' network.

"A lot of these cartoons are not as meaningful to kids as to adults," she told *Animato!* Turner Broadcasting did market surveys which showed "a large percentage of adults thought it (the Cartoon Network) was a good idea."

The approach for building up the network viewership is not unlike what Nickelodeon/Nick at Nite has done. Hooking baby-boomers to watch re-runs of some classic and not-so-classic shows has resulted in building an audience of both adults and kids. While Cohen is quick to point out the Cartoon Network is not copying Nick at Nite's blueprint, the plan is similar; Mom and Dad will introduce their children to programming they enjoyed as kids. "Our approach is to make the old feel fresh," explained Cohen. "We will give our audience a contemporary reason for viewing."

The Cartoon Network library is very impressive. The entire output of the Hanna-Barbera and MGM studios is owned outright by Turner Broadcasting as well as the Fleischer and Famous Popeye cartoons. The company also has



Betty Cohen

control of a large number of the Warner Brothers shorts as well. The only major characters not represented are the Lantz stars (Woody Woodpecker, Chilly Willy), Casper the Ghost, Betty Boop, the Terrytoon characters (Mighty Mouse, Gandy and Sourpuss) and the Disney stars.

In total, 8,500 titles are available to air over the channel. Considering many of these shorts are already being seen on the Turner channels of TNT and TBS, one might wonder how much overlap there will be. Cohen acknowledged some cartoons might air on all three, but never on the same day or the same time.

Some of the more popular Hanna-Barbera titles, such as *The Flintstones* and *The Jetsons* are currently committed to syndication deals which would prevent their immediate broadcast over the Turner network. The company is currently negotiating to retrieve those shows as soon as possible.

The Hanna-Barbera library is a major component of the network, and that fact might make some animation fans wince. After all, one can't really imagine many adult fans actually yearning to experience *Touche Turtle* again, much less *Atom Ant* or *Magilla Gorilla*. Those fans

should take heart, as Cohen notes the network will air *Toonheads* nightly at 11:00 p.m. This show will air the Popeye cartoons in their original glorious black and white, as well as many of the black and white Looney Tunes, World War II propaganda shorts and cartoons with ethnic humor. It's a show geared toward adults, and the controversial cartoons will be introduced in such a way as to place them in a historically accurate context.

Naturally, fans will wonder if original productions for the network are in the works, and Cohen assured the plans are there but not until the network has been on the air for three years. Cohen has been "heartened by the success of the Nicktoons. It has made me really happy, because they were not designed to sell toys. That's not their reason for being."

At a time when NBC is getting out of children's programming, one wonders about the wisdom of starting this cable service. Cohen assured that NBC's decision is "less of a statement if animation can work than it is if NBC can compete." She notes that advertising dollars aimed at children have increased, and advertisers are looking for ways to reach young audiences. "There is a boom in animation. It's been 'here to stay' for 40 years on television," Cohen exclaimed.

Although advertiser support, a ready audience and available programming are not problems, getting onto cable systems is a challenge. A big one. "Many systems have run out of space," said Cohen, adding that thankfully for the Cartoon Network and other new channels many cable systems are up-grading their technology which will allow for more choices. Turner Broadcasting is prepared, as it was for TNT, to weather a few lean years before the new network can be widely seen.

Just as music fans demanded their MTV, animation fans should contact their cable systems about the Cartoon Network. Cohen declined to say how many cable systems have signed up for the new service. Cohen sees the Cartoon Network as "not just a channel, but a real force in broadcasting." Animation fans will see it as a paradise.

The Famous Unknown: A Tribute to Walter Clinton

by John Province

The late MGM and Hanna-Barbera animator Walter F. Clinton was perhaps one of the industry's best kept secrets. Never vocal, flashy or seeking the lime-light for his achievements, Clinton was a master craftsman of the old school strongly devoted to the ethic of letting his work speak for itself. His greatest personal accolade was that he was simply doing the best work he was capable of producing.

During his 35 years in animation, Clinton's hands gave life to some of the most famous characters in the business such as Droopy, Screwy Squirrel, Red Hot Riding Hood, Tom and Jerry, Ruff and Reddy, The Flintstones, Yogi Bear and Huckleberry Hound as well as dozens of films with no main character at all. Some of the pictures made under Tex Avery are now hailed as full-fledged classics and a handful have been chosen for the Congressional Film Library in Washington, D.C. It's no accident that of the nine Avery films comprising the "Screwball Classics" videocassette collection, eight contain key animation by Walt Clinton.

"I had a lot of respect for Walt," commented fellow MGM veteran Irv Spence recently. "We all did. He was an excellent draftsman and really knew what he was doing."

When interviewing Mr. Clinton in September and October of 1991 I discovered a quiet reticent gentleman completely amazed that anyone was interested in discussing his career in animation which had ended well over 20 years ago. Throughout our two sessions he was always very modest in discussing his own contribution, but very quick to praise the work of others.

He passed away in January of this year and as I write these words I can still hear his admonition: 'Now don't write a lot of baloney about me, just tell 'em I did the best I could.'

There was no need for any baloney Walt, the truth was more than enough.



**Walt Clinton (seated) draws Mickey Mouse while at Disney, circa 1941.
(Photo, collection of Wilma Clinton)**

Why don't we begin with a summary of your early life?

I was born in St. Louis, Missouri and turned 85 on October 1st. My mother died when I was just a kid and my father didn't have any patience with my wanting to be an artist. He thought it was inevitable that all artists starved to death and wanted me to follow him into the wholesale shoe business. He arranged for me to get a job in a store. One day the manager came in and asked how I was doing. When he went upstairs they found me in the attic where the shoes were stored and I had drawn little cartoons and characters on the sides of all the shoe boxes. This was back in the days of "Mutt and Jeff" and "Maggie and Jiggs" which I enjoyed very much.

I attended University in St. Louis but did not graduate. After leaving, I took a correspondence course in cartooning where you would draw at home and then send it in to be criticized.

What was your first paying art job?

I answered an advertisement in the newspaper and got a job assisting Harry Tuthill on a comic strip he did called "The Bungle Family." This was in 1934. He owned a very sizable estate outside of St. Louis. I showed him some samples of my work and he said he thought they were okay and hired me at \$35 a week. My first day I showed up and he wasn't around. There was a fellow doing lettering at a drawing board and it was a real fancy layout with lots of books and paintings on the walls. I took a book and began leafing

through it when suddenly I felt this presence at my elbow. It was Harry. "What do you think you're doing!?" he asked. I told him there wasn't anything else for me to do yet. "Come with me and I'll give you plenty to keep you busy," he said.

I spent a measured year with Harry Tuthill and I really didn't enjoy it either. He was trying to put girls into the strip only he didn't like the way he drew them. So he would pencil them in and then I was supposed to go over and remodel them to make them look better, which was impossible. It never would have worked the way he wanted to do it.

Was he as sarcastic in person as the content of the strip would suggest?

Oh yes, and he wrote all his own stuff. He could be as mean as a hornet and he was tough to work for. He told me of his humble beginnings and I guess his first job was washing out milk cans in a dairy. He was an eccentric, a real screwball. He had a bathroom just off the studio where he would take off all his clothes, and he thought absolutely nothing of walking past us stark naked. There was a swimming pool on the other end of the back yard and he would take off running across the yard and jump in the pool. He did this every day until a neighbor lady saw him from a second story window. Pretty soon the cops came by and took him off to the side and told him "Now that's enough of that!". [laughs]

After about a year I would come in each morning and he would say, "Why can't you go down to the library and get a book on trees?". I thought that was pretty strange all right. The next day he'd tell me to go get a book about steamrollers, and the next day, something else. It finally dawned on me that he was trying to tell me in his own way to go look for another job!

At that time were you interested in getting your own comic strip?

I was interested in anything that

would get me away from Harry Tuthill. [laughs] There was an advertisement in the newspaper saying that Walt Disney needed artists. This was in 1935 so work had begun on **Snow White** but really hadn't gotten very far along. I sent out some samples and they wrote back and

said they liked them. They wouldn't pay my way out there though, but I know they did for some fellows. They didn't like my samples that much I guess. Anyway, my wife said, "Go on out there any way." So I did and was enrolled in their inbetweening classes under George Drake at the old studio on Hyper-

ion. George was in charge of the inbetweeners where basically you spent all day drawing Mickeys and Donalds, and you'd better learn to draw them pretty darned well if you wanted to stay around.

George Drake is not remembered very warmly by most of the Disney alumni.

Maybe so, but for some reason he took a liking to me and sort of took me under his wing. He would walk around and look at your work and then fire the ones he didn't were good enough. After not too very long I began to notice that there were fewer and fewer people coming to work every day. I told my wife, "Pack your bags, they're dropping out of that place like flies." It was terribly sad. Men would get fired and you would see them outside the building crying. They had wives and babies and had spent everything they had to come to California.

Just out of curiosity, had you seen any animation as a youngster?

Just "Felix the Cat," and I really didn't think too much of it. Actually my ambition was always much higher than animation. I wanted to be an illustrator and have my drawings appear in the finest magazines and newspapers. That was my idea of success. Animation just kept getting in the way.

Having survived George Drake and inbetweening class where did you go?

I was assigned to work with Fred Spencer who was a top animator there at the studio. Fred, for some reason, had a dislike for the men from New York. So when they told him they had one from St. Louis he said, "I'll take him." He worked on all of the Donald Duck cartoons so that's naturally what I wound up doing. We were working in **Dopey** for **Snow White** when he was killed in an automobile accident and I inherited his work and assistants.

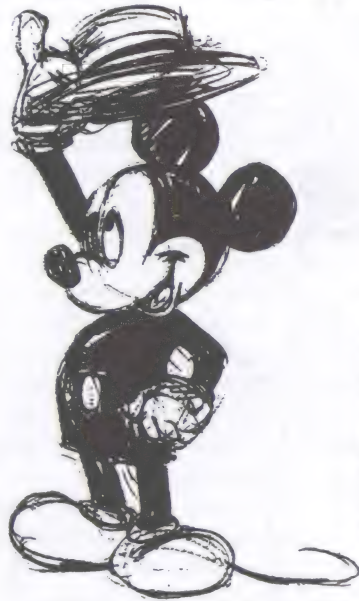
How much time had passed from your being in inbetweening to working on Snow White?

Not nearly enough and I was nowhere near ready. I remember a friend of mine named Hal Kane and I standing outside of the animation building and him telling me, "Gee Walt, this sure is a big boost for you." They really rushed me along too fast and I still had a heck of a lot to learn about animation.

What kind of relationship did you have with Walt Disney? Was any of your stuff ever "sweatboxed" with him present?

Yes it was, and though he didn't tell me to my face, he let it be known that he really liked a pencil test I had done of a little girl skipping around. I think it was that test that convinced him to make me an animator. We would meet in the hall and talk briefly if I was working late or something. I was never what you could call a personal

friend or anything like that. He was kind of a hard guy to get to know. Actually, if you want to know the inside stuff about the Disney brothers, I'm not the guy. I was a very small cog in a very large machine. Walt had his Nine Old Men who worked on the features, and others like Fred Moore whom I knew very well.



© Walt Disney Studios



A self-caricature by Walt Clinton

Freddy was a top animator and basically just a farm boy at heart.

*Did you attend the premier of **Snow White**?*

They had a special showing for the employees at a theatre in West Hollywood. You had to pick up special tickets at the studio to get in. After **Snow White**, it was back to doing ducks for me.

You left Disney Studio in 1941 as a result of the strike. What do you remember about those events?

It was a pretty nasty time. I really didn't want to go out on strike and I was glad just to be making a living. I really didn't have any feelings on it one way or the other, but when they went out, I did too. I had to. I always tried to arrange a trip or something when they were picketing and just tried to avoid the whole thing. It was pretty bad. They would yell at Walt when he drove through the gates. The studio was in a bad way, and there was a time when Walt couldn't even get a loan from a bank. While I wasn't exactly in sympathy with strikers I knew he hadn't exactly been on the up and up with the boys. We worked a lot of hours we didn't get paid for and they needed a union and course we had Art Babbitt and Bill Tytla who were very union-minded. They were top men and making a lot of money and they lost it all and gave a lot.

Walt's attitude certainly didn't help things. He thought that this thing was creation and any infringement on it wasn't going to set well with him at all. Charlie Show's book does a pretty good job of telling about the real Walt Disney. [*Walt: Backstage Adventures with Walt Disney* by Charlie Shows published 1979 by Windsong International Books.]

How did you get your position in the MGM animation department?

I had applied over there while I was out for a summer doing illustrations for a local magazine. Word had gotten out that we were a collection of Disney castoffs.

One day Mr. Quimby called me and told me they had an opening but that I would have to start back at the beginning as an assistant. I knew I could already animate so I took the job as an assistant to Ken Muse who had been at Disney. That was my entry into MGM, through Ken Muse,

real silly stuff, but they were pretty much as the audiences demanded at the time as a release from the war news. The troops overseas loved them.

*You worked on all the great Avery characters such as **Droopy**, **Screwy Squirrel** and the **Red Hot Riding Hoods**, but there were never any continuing characters. Why is that?*

The public didn't seem to demand it and Tex didn't either. The big shots at MGM never thought very much of the animation department because our films were just used as fillers. It wasn't much of an operation. We were stuck way out on one of the back lots and it was just us, Quimby, and his secretary. Never a big operation at all.

Tex had Preston Blair in his unit and he's a very good artist. We also had Irv Spence who is a very fine draftsman and did that scene in **Anchors Aweigh** where Tom and Jerry dance with Gene Kelly. That was excellent, very fine animation. Gene Hazelton was there too and designed a lot of

great characters for us to use. So was Claude Smith who did our model sheets, and Mike Lah who was not only a good animator, but a very fine golfer as well.

I did layouts for the Hanna-Barbera unit when their regular man, Dick Bickenbach was gone. It was about an 80-20 arrangement and I enjoyed doing layouts because they would let me at work at home.

For those who might not know, what is layout?

First you get the story of the film as conceived by someone else, something like a comic strip. It comes to the layout man in that form and he then begins to set it up for animation; the field size, whether it will be a close up or a pan of a background. The director approves this and then it goes to the animator.

Did you ever contribute any gags to



A Tex Avery Cat by Clinton

and he was a very nice guy and always very kind to me. He was a good animator too and worked on his drawings like a dog.

After a couple of months the word went out that they were getting ready to fire someone in Tex Avery's unit and that Tex wanted me to replace him. I enjoyed working with Tex and working with him was probably what I am the proudest of. He always set a very high standard, so I was always very complemented that he liked my stuff. He demanded a good job and was a great guy to work for, always joking. Some of his films got a little off beat and we turned out a clinker or two, but he originated a lot of gags. I've always been sorry that he didn't live to get the credit he deserved. Tex's cartoons were the ones with the character's eyes popping out of the sockets and the like;

© Turner Broadcasting Systems

the films you animated?

I did at Disney and they paid us five bucks each for them. At MGM Tex wrote all his own stuff and he had Heck Allen to help him. But we would have storyboard sessions for each film and get to toss our nickel's worth in. We all worked on those films and they just sort of grew from the ground up. Any studio will take a good gag when they can get it.

Many of the animators I spoke to have taken piano or studied music to help their work. Did you ever do anything like that?

Yes, that's true, it will help. I used a metronome for years, a lot of them did. If you're doing something in a three-quarters time, like a march, you just set your metronome. They were a great help because you could hear that beat. If you're not on the beat, you're not there, and you've got to be there when you're animating.

The way I used to work is that if you wanted to show a man walking you make one extreme from where his foot is to where it's going. Then you make all the others; high point where the foot is all the way up; contact point, and then down where the heel touches. Then you indicate where the other drawings go so that the inbetweener can make them. Every motion had to be timed out that way. Then you'd work on their gestures, if they use their hands and likewise.

We would, as a rule, run a pencil test of our stuff and Tex would go over it with us, always trying to perfect it. Then he would run it for all of us in the unit, and then for the whole department. You wouldn't want to send something over to ink and paint that you weren't sure of and this was his way of trying to improve the product.

Speaking of music, the MGM cartoons had some of the best, and quite a lot of classical music as well.

Scott Bradley was in charge of that and we had the entire MGM orchestra set up on a sound stage. I used to go over and listen to the music being recorded for the films and I got to watch quite a few being made, such as *Singin' in the Rain*. It was great to watch, but I couldn't always enjoy it because I had to keep on the clock. It was nice at MGM because there were a lot of stars around and we got to eat in the big commissary. Esther Williams was a

friend to us animators. She liked animation and we really liked her. Lucille Ball and Gene Kelly were fans and Sinatra would drop by occasionally.

How about Fred Quimby? What was his role at the MGM animation department?

I guess he tried to run the office as best he could, but he didn't know a thing about animation and I think I'm being kind in saying that. He had no sense of humor, and Tex was playing jokes on him all the time only Quimby never knew it. He had sort of flat feet and he would try to sneak up on us but you could hear that flop, flop, flop, a mile away! Tex would be at his drawing board and hear him coming and say, "Cheezit fellas, here comes the hornet!" Quimby fired one of the boys once and the fella showed up on the other side of one of the back lots where they were shooting exteriors with a megaphone. For some reason they hired him back! [laughs].

We were at one end of the hall and Hanna-Barbera was at the other end. Tex had gotten a wooden ball and would roll it down to the other door. Then they would roll it back and it would make a bumpity-bump noise that Quimby could

hear downstairs. He had sort of a lisp and he'd say, "Whath that noith up there? I'm gonna find what that noith ith!" One time one of the fellas was innocently walking down the hall and picked up the ball just as Quimby rounded the corner. [laughs] I can remember a lot of funny things we used to do to him, but we always had to explain the gags to him.

The early and mid 1950s were hard times in the animation business; the end of theatricals and the rise of television. Were you at MGM when Tex left?

Actually we thought everything was along just fine. Then they started putting up these notices saying that the studio might close. Eddie Barge, Ray Patterson, Ken Muse and me went over to Lantz to see if they would hire us as a unit but they didn't want to pay us anything. The studio was always looking for ways to cut costs and get rid of people and you really had to watch yourself. The full animation we did at Disney and MGM was beautiful, but very expensive and you couldn't afford to do it today. I had a very difficult time making the transition to limited animation because as an artist I didn't feel I was being allowed to do my best.

Tex and I left the very same day. We



Detail of a Barney Bear sketch by Walt Clinton



Ruff and Reddy and supporting cast by Walt Clinton

came to work one morning and the place was closed. It was just that simple. There was about a year in there when Hanna-Barbera were getting their backing and I worked as a director for King Studios directing animated cartoons. Bob Clampett wanted me to come work for him, but at King I was a director and was offered a good wage, so I took that.

When you returned to the newly formed Hanna-Barbera Studio you did **Ruff & Reddy**.

Yes, and I did layouts for **The Flintstones** when that went on TV and decided to retire in 1969. I had my 35 years in and just didn't enjoy it any more. They were constantly bringing in new people and I was getting older. Even if I had gotten a better job I doubt I would have stayed because animation was starting to get in the way of golf.

As you look over your career, what impresses Walt Clinton?

The time I worked with Tex, however I would like to say that I think Bill and Joe did a great job of putting **The Flintstones** together. They are very nicely drawn and the voices are just great. I didn't think all that much of it at the time, but now that I see it again I appreciate it a little more. I see some of my old stuff on TV and can never recognize my anima-

tion though I've tried and tried. Now I just pick out the best scene in the picture and say "That's mine!" [laughs]

Do you think your animated cartoons are funny? What is the eternal appeal of animation?

Oh, no. My wife watches them though and she laughs. I just never really thought that much of them, but some people do perhaps. As for its appeal, I really can't say other than it appears to attract certain kinds of people while others can take it or leave it. It's a medium that can express things that could not be done in any other way. **Snow White** would not have been nearly as charming a film if it had been a live-action film.

In your studio you have literally stacks of sample of comic strips that you have drawn up. Even as a top animator did you still have the comic strip bug? Would you have left animation if you had sold a strip to a syndicate?

Yes, I would have. I wanted to be an illustrator and those are samples of things I drew up and never did anything with. My problem is that I would draw up a week's worth of samples and then never get around to sending them in! As for me being one of the best, I appreciate your words and thank you for them but I really don't think I was all that good. It's just the

type of guy I am. If I were hanging wallpaper, I would study and try to perfect it until I knew I was doing the best I could. I saw some very fine draftsmen in this business; men who were kicked out or left and were never heard of again, and those fellows could really draw. I would like to be remembered just as a fellow who did the best he could.

*Do you keep up with current animation? How about **The Simpsons**?*

You mean the ones with the jagged heads? Now that's what I call taking limited animation just a little bit too far. [laughs] There's a lot of fine animation out today and I think some of it is even better than our old stuff. I just saw **The Rescuers Down Under** the other day, and there's some very fine animation in it. There's a lot of opportunity in animation these days, but liking it and wanting to do it are the two big prerequisites. You really have to love this business to get a job in this field.

Mr. Clinton, you have been overly modest this evening, but I know I speak for many fans when I say that the films you made will be watched and bring a lot of laughter for a long, long time to come.

Well, thank you for your time and kind words, John, that's a nice thing to think about.

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ACME ACRES AGAIN

A critical Guide to Tiny Toons Adventures (Part Two)

by Dave Mackey

Part two of the episode guide to **Tiny Toon Adventures** (part one appeared in *Animato!* 21) consists of the one first-season episode listed as "unavailable for viewing" and all 13 second-season episodes, which now makes the total number of episodes 78.

It should be noted that the writer credits are a little more fragmented this year, being broken down into storyline, dialogue and gags in some extreme cases; these are noted. The second season episodes were all produced by Sherri Stoner and directed by some of the returning TTA directors from last season as well as some newcomers at the helm.

A bit of a corrective to the first installment of this guide: *Best O' Plucky, Duck Day* was reformatted into Shorts format after its initial broadcast. *One Minute Till Three* was written by Tom Minton and Tom Ruegger; *Sticky Feathers Duck* by Beth Bornstein, and *Duck In The Dark* by Eddie Fitzgerald, Paul Dini and Tom Minton. This is in addition to the corrections noted by Paul Dini in the last issue: *To Bleep Or Not To Bleep* is written by Stephen Langford/Paul Dini, and *Li'l Sneezer* by Sherri Stoner/Paul Dini.

Acme Cable TV (A) 11/11/91 *** / D: Alfred Gimeno / W: Paul Dini, Tom Ruegger, Nicholas Hollander, Peter Hastings / Weak-sister sequel (but still pretty good) to last season's uproarious *KACME-TV* features Babs and Buster sampling television parodies from among "685 channels of viewer-pleasin' mindrot" on the local cable system. Included are parodies of *Bullwinkle*, *True-Life Adventures*, *Lassie*, *Hollywood Squares*, *Roseanne*, *The Cosby Show*, and even the infomercial "Amazing Discoveries."

The Amazing Three (S) 11/25/91 *** / D: Byron Vaughns / W: Arleen Sorkin, Beth Milstein / Babs, Fifi and Shirley go to a party at Perfecto Prep so they can date older guys, so they put on makeup to make themselves look older.

Buster And Babs Go Hawaiian (A) 11/18/91 **** / D: probably Art Leonardi (not credited) / W: Renee Carter, Sarah Creef, Amy Crosby / When passed over for the starring role in the latest **Tiny Toon** script, Buster and Babs complain to Steven Spielberg, who substitutes a script sent to him by three 13-year-old girls (as this story really was!). In said script, Buster and Babs take a Hawaiian vacation but lose their money, so they charge everything on Bugs' gold card.

Some very good gags and pop-culture slams; sometimes better than some of the stuff the regular writers come up with. Caricatures include the three story authors, staff writers Sherri Stoner, Paul Dini and Nick Hollander, Spielberg, and director Leonardi (who gets konked by an anvil after his cameo).

C.L.I.D.E. And Prejudice (S) 9/18/91 *** / D: Ken Boyer / W: Story by Sherri Stoner; written by Mark Saraceni / New student C.L.I.D.E., an alien android, is ostracized by Max and other classmates at Acme Loo, until befriended by Buster Bunny. Funniest aspect of C.L.I.D.E.'s personality: he speaks in game-show clichés and calls everyone Dave (as did HAL in the film **2001**).

A Cub For Grub (S) 11/4/91 ** / D: Art Leonardi / W: Dale Hale / Li'l Sneezer and Furrball as scouts out camping. As usual, Furrball gets the business. This and the other two 11/4/91 shorts are interrupted by a whale lecturing on the differences between toon physics and real physics.

Fit To Be Toyed (S) 9/20/91 ** / D: Art Leonardi / W: Paul Dini / Monty's long-abandoned imagination comes back to him so he can find new ways to play with an old toy, specifically a paddleball. Funniest scene: Monty and Elmyra as beatniks. If the title pun sounds familiar, it should: it was previously used in the late 1950's on a Paramount Modern Madcap. Prologue: a commercial for "Toys R Mine."

Happy Birthday Hamton (S) 9/20/91 *** / D: Art Leonardi / W: Nicholas Hollander / Buster, Babs and Plucky would rather keep the neat stuff they've bought Hamton for his birthday, so they give the pig their own childhood toys.

High Toon (A) 3/29/91 ** / D: Glen Kennedy / W: Chuck Menville / Buster and Babs tunnel into an Old West town by mistake and have to help bring the Coyote Kid and his gang to justice. This was the final original first-season episode aired, regarded by many fans as a real letdown from the actual last episode, *KACME-TV*.

Hog Wild Hamton (A) 9/19/91 **** / D: Rich Arons / W: Script by Paul Dini, Bob Carrau; gags by Greg Reyna, Enrique May, Rich Arons, Rusty Mills / Hamton's home alone while his parents are away for the weekend, so Plucky calls for a big party, complete with loud music, lots of food and a game of Spin The Bottle with the girls; eventually Hamton's house is destroyed, putting the pig into a panic. Ed McMahon, Egghead Jr. (from *Crockett Doodle Doo*) and some Martians (*Jumpin' Jupiter*) put in a cameo appearance. One of the better Adventure entries.

It's All Relatives (S) 9/16/91 *** / D: Barry Caldwell / W: Sherri Stoner / Another Babs tour-de-force as she puts on a show for her visiting grandmother. She imitates (among others) Madonna, Popeye, Roger Rabbit, Charlie Brown, Marge, Bart and Maggie Simpson, and Yogi Bear, with music and backgrounds cleverly keeping up with the changes.

The Kite (S) 9/16/91 *** / D: Kent Butterworth / W: Nicholas Hollander / An insect has fallen in love with Hamton's kite, which causes the poor pig all sorts of trouble.

Kon-Ducki (A) 2/10/92 *** / D: Rich Arons / W: Sherri Stoner, Peter Hastings, Stephen Hibbert / High seas epic: Pluck Heyerdahl and his pal Kum-By-Yah (Hamton) set sail to Salinas in a

tiny boat stocked with '70s artifacts like bean bag chairs, Popeil Pocket Fisherman and Peter Frampton 8-tracks. Look fast for some nautical cameo gags. The actual story takes up the first two program segments; the last segment is the documentary *The Making Of Kon-Ducki*.

Lame Joke (S) 11/22/91
** / D: Jon McClenahan / W: "Shecky" Hollander, "Boom-Boom" Stoner; story by Nicholas Hollander, Kevin Frank / When Buster's joke dies, Henny Youngman attempts to resuscitate it to no avail, so the Toons give it a decent burial. Mr. Youngman (drawn as, what else? a hen) voiced his own appearance, violin in hand, in this and the wraps for the two other cartoons of this date.

Lifeguard Lunacy (S) 9/16/91 *** / D: Norm McCabe / W: Paul Dini, Chris Otsuki / A day at the pool with junior lifeguard Calamity Coyote is sabotaged by Elmyra. Excellently illustrates why you should wait 30 minutes after eating before going in swimming. Norm McCabe, somewhere around 80, took his first director credit in 48 years with this short.

My Dinner With Elmyra (double-length) (S) 11/25/91 *** / D: Byron Vaughns / W: Paul Dini / By order of his mother, Montana Max goes on a date with Elmyra: dinner at Weenie Burger, then a movie.

Once Upon A Star (S) 11/4/91 *** / D: Art Leonardi / W: Nicholas Hollander; story by Tom Ruegger / Elmyra wishes on a star for her Barbet doll to come to life and it does. If you're keeping track of Disney slams, she also kills a cockroach who sings like Jiminy Cricket.

One Beer (S) 9/18/91 * / D: Ken Boyer / W: Nicholas Hollander; story by Wayne Kaatz / Don't drink and drive, kids. There, you don't have to watch this cartoon now.

The Potty Years (S) 11/22/91 **** / D: Jon McClenahan / W: Tom Ruegger / When being toilet trained, little Plucky

decides to flush anything and everything he can find down the toilet, causing it to overflow. Tom Ruegger's son Nathan does the voice of the young Plucky, whose favorite expression is "Water go down the hooooooooole." Seldom is toilet humor done with such finesse.



© Warner Bros.

Sepulveda Boulevard (A) 2/17/92 *** / D: Byron Vaughns / W: Deanna Oliver / Billy Wilder's classic **Sunset Boulevard** recast as follows: Elmyra as Gloria Swanson, Max as William Holden, and Hamton as Erich von Stroheim. Washed-up Cutesy Toons starlet Elmyra Desmond is told she used to be a big star, to which she retorts, "I AM big... it's the cartoons that got small!" Max, playing a cartoon writer, seems to have borrowed his business cards from Michael Maltese. Lots of references from the film, some of which may be over the heads of regular TTA viewers.

Slaughterhouse Jive (S) 9/17/91 ** / D: Rich Arons / W: Gordon Bressack / Spot gags on a tour of Montana Max's abbatoir are interrupted when Buster, Babs, Plucky and Hamton are almost turned into sausage. So they convince Max to not make any animals into meat and convert the plant to process veggies. Bressack's script is loaded with his trademark social consciousness.

Stand-Up And Deliver (S) 11/22/91 *** / D: Jon McClenahan / W: Sherri Stoner / Babs (again written by Stoner) is on center stage at open mike night at a comedy club. Comics lampooned include Emo Phillips, Andrew Dice Clay and Robin Williams (great impersonation by Maurice Lamarche).

Strung Along Kitty (S) 9/20/91 **** / D: Byron Vaughns / W: Charlie Howell; story by Sherri Stoner / Furrball has fun with a little piece of yellow ribbon. As always, the best TTA's are the ones that eschew dialogue and let the gags tell the story — a rarity in today's "there he goes" world of TV animation.

Take Elmyra, Please (A) 2/24/92 ** / D: Ken Boyer / W: Story by Nick Hollander, written by M.D. Sweeney, John McCann / Final first-run episode of 1991-1992 season is actually a pilot for a proposed series that spotlighted Elmyra and her family.

That's Art Folks (S) 9/17/91 *** / D: Eddie Fitzgerald / W: Nick Hollander / If Wackyland were inspired more by the Old Masters than Dali, this is what would result: Babs is knocked unconscious in the art museum and imagines herself in *The World Of Art*, interacting with the figures of famous paintings. Babs, yet again transformed into a mature woman-wabbit, sings a song called "Squash and Stretch" (written by TTA staff artists Jennifer Lerew and Bob Doucette) about how much more fun it is to be an animated character.

When You're Hot (S) 9/17/91 ** / D: Rich Arons / W: Earl Kress / While on a class trip to the firehouse, the Tiny Toons become unwilling volunteer firefighters.

Why Dizzy Can't Read (S) 9/18/91 *** / D: Byron Vaughns / W: Story by Sherri Stoner, written by Stephen Hibbert / Because he's watching too much television, that's why. Fake episode of TTA is promo'd, "Plucky's Turkish Prison." Love to see THAT one.

The Yearbook Star (S) 11/4/91 *** / D: Art Leonardi / W: Chris Otsuki, Dale Hale / Babs and Plucky have an annual bet over whose picture is in the Acme Loo yearbook more (with the loser suffering a humiliation of the winner's request), so Plucky becomes yearbook editor in order to win.

Th-th-that's all Folks!

Tales From the Rat's Nest

An Interview with *Aladdin's* John Musker



John Musker (left) with Ron Clements (right). Photo © The Walt Disney Company.

by Jim Fanning

John Musker is, along with co-director Ron Clements, the most experienced of the new generation of Disney animation directors. Musker's first directorial work was on *The Great Mouse Detective* (1986), followed by *The Little Mermaid* (1990), which brought back from the dead the animated fairy tale and firmly re-established Disney's mastery of the animated feature form.

The phenomenal success of *Mermaid* helped bring about the current renaissance of animation and paved the way for the mega success of *Beauty and the Beast*. Here, Musker traces the development of his career during the Disney animation power struggles of the late 1970s and early '80s and talks about working with Clements, the loss of lyricist Howard Ashman, the risky business of making a Disney feature with a male leading character, the male prejudice toward animation, and other not necessarily testosterone related challenges of directing *Aladdin*, Disney's next animated feature, scheduled for release in November, 1992.

When did you first become interested in animation?

The really weird thing is that I actually wanted to work for Disney as an animator when I was like six or seven. Somehow I got Bob Thomas' *Art of Animation* book out of our local library when I was younger and I was really intrigued seeing the process of it. I read Diane Disney Miller's book, you know, her biography of her father and I said, "Yeah, that's what I'm going to do. I'm gonna grow up, I'm gonna work for Disney." I always drew as a kid in grammar school and high school, I was a cartoonist on the paper and all that but I kind of drifted away from animation. I got more interested in comic books and editorial cartooning. I was an editorial cartoonist in college. I had all the Marvel comics by Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko in the '60s and I thought maybe I'd want to go into doing comic books.

How did your schooling affect your artistic career?

I went to this Jesuit high school in Chicago where they emphasized that college was this enrichment thing and it

shouldn't be treated as vocational school. I kind of bought into that, that I should be a renaissance person. So I didn't major in art in college. I went to Northwestern and I majored in English because, being the procrastinator and the lazy slug that I am, I thought by majoring in English I would be a little better rounded and I'd read a lot of books that I would like to read, but without being forced to do it, I wouldn't ever actually read them.

I never really had art classes in high school. I felt what little I had seemed incredibly self-taught. I would occasionally take a summer class in drawing. I went to the Art Institute of Chicago for a summer and stuff like that. So my college career was winding down and I was wondering what am I going to do for a job.

Then I saw Richard Williams in the Chicago Film Festival in '72. He'd just finished *A Christmas Carol* and he had a retrospective of his work so I went to hear him speak. I was really intrigued by his comments about animation and by looking at animation. I thought, gee, this is drawing and moviemaking combined. In high school and college I had made Super

8 live action films my friend and I in college did live action features, 90 minutes long, it was really insane. It took us three years to do it during college. I remember that more than I remember my college career. And we happened to get done right around the end of getting out of school. So I heard Williams speak and then Chuck Jones spoke at Northwestern in '73 or '74. They had a retrospective of some of his films, and again, he talked about animation.

And then Christopher Finch's book *The Art of Walt Disney* came out. I read that and it mentioned the training program at Disney's. And I thought, gee, this seems like it could be a neat thing to do. So I put together a portfolio after I got out of Northwestern. I just sort of bummed around zoos in the freezing cold in Chicago, trying to draw animals. Then I also went to a natural history museum in Chicago. Of course, all the animals are stuffed. That's the way the drawings came out - they looked like stuffed animals. They wanted action poses and I drew pretty stiff, bad drawings.

So I sent the portfolio to Disney and they rejected it. They said, "You don't draw well enough, get out of here!" I also sent a portfolio to Marvel comics. They sent it back - "Get out of here!" So I said, "My plan is not working too well here. What am I doing?" But then Disney sent me a note like a week later. It said, "Well, maybe you meant to send this to Cal Arts which is just getting running with this character animation program." Of course, I'd never heard of Cal Arts. I didn't know what they were talking about, and I'd sworn I'd never go to graduate school because I didn't want to become a permanent student. I was afraid I'd sort of descend into academia and never emerge again and turn into a hermit.

What was appealing to me about getting into animation is I felt it was an artistic pursuit where you weren't just by yourself. There was sort of a social aspect to it. I'd done a little bit of theater, community theater, church type theater, in high school and I really liked the camaraderie of being with people, aiming toward a common end but not just being away in a room and drawing, but that there was a social aspect to it because I was fairly introverted anyway. By nature I might become a recluse so I thought

animation might be a way of not being a recluse.

So I sent the portfolio to Cal Arts and they accepted it. I thought I'll go there for a year just see what it's like. And it was kind of crazy because I wasn't going to get a Masters Degree out of it. It was almost like starting over. So I went to Cal Arts, never having even seen the school.

What happened after that first year at Cal Arts?

Some Disney people came out at the end of the year to review student work, which we hadn't been aware they were going to do at all. We just threw together our tests and they liked mine and invited me to come and work there, sort of as a full time intern. I was intimidated both by coming in there completely cold and also by just the idea of suddenly being in the working world, having to live in an apartment and be a grown-up. Both of those things were a little spooky to me. So I cooked up a deal where I got to go to Disney as an intern just during the summer for six weeks. I worked with Eric Larson. He was a great teacher and I really enjoyed working with him that summer of '76, I guess it was. I really felt having worked with him that there was stuff that I'd like to go back and do on my own. So I told them I'd like to go back to school for a year and then come back to the studio. They said fine, sure, go back.

I went back to Cal Arts for a second year and tried to apply some of the things I'd learned from Eric during that summer, worked out my own test. As it turned out in typical Disney fashion, as the end of the year was coming closer, I heard through the grapevine, hey, this is no sure thing. "We're not necessarily taking you at the end of this year." I had spent that whole year kind of gearing up - okay, now I'm going to become a real person, go out into the working world.

How were you finally hired by Disney?

I showed them my test and they loved it. They hired me in May of '77 as part of the first of the character animation wave from Cal Arts. We went through a little bit of training, but then they pressed us into working on *The Small One*, the Christmas featurette. Other people were working on *Fox and the Hound*. They didn't want to take them off that and they wanted to keep this thing going.

There was some controversy as soon as we got there because there was a union thing where we were trainees and we were going to do production animation. And the union said these guys can't animate if they're just trainees. So they had to make us assistants.

They had us do a 15 foot pencil test under Eric's supervision to decide whether or not they'd promote us to assistants. I did this test of a chubby woman who had a Farrah Fawcett hairdo. Of course, at that time Farrah Fawcett was really something. They liked that test and they made me an assistant.

Pete's Dragon was behind schedule and they were pressing everybody into doing clean-up on it so Brad Bird and I took a clean-up test. We both flunked the test. They hated our clean-up so much they said you better stay just doing the rough stuff because you're so bad at clean-up.

People thought we threw the test, that I had deliberately done poorly. But, no, I just wasn't any good at it. So as it turned out we did go to work on *Small One*. I wasn't credited on the film. I got mad about that because I think they said you had to have a hundred feet of animation. I had like 60 feet of animation.

Who did you work with on The Small One?

I worked with Cliff Nordberg on that. I was sort of under his supervision. He was working on the auctioneer character so I did some of that character. I did the kind of shots that Cliff didn't want to do. I felt like I learned a lot with Cliff. I know Cliff got rapped at the studio because he was considered really broad, didn't draw as well as a lot of the people, but he approached it really intuitively and directly. I was glad I got to work with him. Eric Larson briefly was the director, but then Eric was deposed on *Small One*. Don Bluth didn't like Eric for whatever reason, I don't know. Ultimately, there was sort of a coup d'etat and Don Bluth was directing it.

Glen Keane had sort of designed stuff with Eric and Don didn't like Glen's designs so they threw those out and John Pomeroy redesigned the thing. I didn't like John's designs particularly, but that's what they went with. The auctioneer was kind of Tony from *Lady and the Tramp* with a different mustache.

I don't know that all this necessarily curried favor with us, who really liked Eric, to have him sort of dumped fairly unceremoniously like that. There was the beginnings of this schism during **Small One** such that myself, Brad Bird, Jerry Rees, Bill Kroyer and some others were all in a suite of rooms at the studio.

Don Bluth named it the "Rat's Nest" because there was a lot of hard feelings going on during **Small One**. We were giving Don a hard time, complaining and kibitzing and, of course, he didn't like it. I can sympathize with that more now being a director, but he felt like we were really getting in his way of getting his ideas on the screen, and he was having people criticize what he was doing, just questioning his thing. And he said basically, "You guys

are new around here, there have always been kings and serfs at the studio, and you guys are serfs, you're not kings. When you get to be kings, maybe you can say something, but you're green." That sort of was a classic word that was thrown back at us.

Andy Gaskill, who I think wasn't all that fond of Don, took an air-brushed sign that said "Rat's Nest" and hung it on the door of our room, sort of christened the room. We took it as a perverse badge of honor: We're in the "Rat's Nest". There were really some bad feelings between people that liked Don and really agreed with him and some of us Cal Arts people and others who were just sort of curmudgeons.

In the meantime, I think Don and his crew were working on their own time on **Banjo, The Woodpile Cat** [Don Bluth's first independent project] and a schism was developing there. So the atmosphere got progressively more and more poisonous. They really wanted to leave and I personally and a lot of people were happy when they left.

That side of the story of the Bluth

exodus I don't think has ever quite been reported. It's been sort of from the Bluth point of view. From Don's point of view, he was thrilled to be out of there and he didn't have to deal with Ron Miller anymore and could seemingly do what he



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wanted. I think he felt that Ron Miller wasn't supporting him, and management was getting in his way and not letting him do the films he wanted to do. I think he felt like we weren't supporting him either, that we were giving him a hard time, so he was getting it at both ends.

He wanted control really, that's what all these things are about. He wanted to do the movies the way he saw them and not have to answer to anyone. And he still wants to do that. A lot of people want to do that. So he left.

Bluth felt he was carrying the true flame of animation, and he still feels that. But we didn't agree with it. Still to this day, I mean, you look at **Rock-A-Doodle**, a film that Don had control over and you tell me. Admittedly he's working under a lot of pressures, laboring under restraints of budget and you name it, but he didn't have Ron Miller telling him what to do and he didn't have Steven Spielberg telling him what to do on that one.

What happened at Disney after the Bluth faction left?

Of course, those of us who had argued with Don Bluth were saying this is

good news, not bad news. This means the civil war had the appearance of ending. What also happened as a result of that - or sort of parallel with that - was the elevation of people at the studio who didn't necessarily have the respect of some of

the younger people who said, "Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston, and Milt Kahl, they were the gods and you guys sort of worked for them," so they didn't respect them quite as much.

It started out well and then again bitter feelings started to come out where people were having run-ins with Ted Berman, Art Stevens and eventually Rick Rich in terms of the creative direction of both **Fox and the Hound** and **Black Cauldron**. [Then Vice President of Creative Affairs] Tom Wilhite, who was there at that point, was looking

for a way to mend that schism. And he said, well, if we have a younger director, maybe that would help. Somebody who's got the ear of some of the younger voices and can be sort of a bridge with the older directors also.

He looked at Joe Hale, who had worked on **Watcher in the Woods**, a live action film, as somebody who was somewhat in the old camp but was open to new ideas. So he made Joe Hale the producer of **Black Cauldron** and installed me as another director, in addition to Art and Ted and Rick. I was sort of grafted onto it. And the problem was that I wasn't in sync with those guys and their approach to the movie. You could arguably say they were more right wing and I was more left wing.

Tim Burton was doing designs and we liked his designs. And actually Joe Hale did, too, having come from his quirky background - he felt they were great, we should do these just the way they are. Then Art and Rick and Ted all said to him this isn't Disney stuff. These aren't dimensional and appealing enough. And Joe Hale got caught in a hard place where

he was really being whipped to shreds between us saying, "No, Joe, come this way," and Art and Ted and Rick saying, "No, Joe, this isn't Disney, come this way." He was in a tug of war going back and forth and it was a mess for him.

So finally he went to Ron Miller and said, "Ron, what kind of movie do you want to make?" We weren't involved in that meeting, but he said the directors (being Art, Ted, and Rick) want to make *this* kind of movie, and the animators are pushing to make *this* kind of movie. And he said, "You can do one that's more traditional or you can do UPA - which one do you want to do?" And - what a surprise - Ron Miller said "I would rather do one that's more traditional."

He said, "I look at the box office returns on *Lady and the Tramp*, which was doing really well in Europe, "Why would I want to change that? Why would I want to deviate from that?" So Joe Hale came back to us and said it's settled, we're going to go more traditional.

Well, even given a traditional route, I think there was some leeway in there, but perhaps our pushing so hard the other way caused an overreaction in the other direction. We felt that the designs that they were coming up with, that the directors were liking, were too realistic and didn't have enough character, were going to be really hard to animate, and weren't very appealing. The whole time I was working on *Black Cauldron* I wanted to quit. Every day I'd come to work thinking I was going to quit. And, in fact, I'd have to sign approval on these model sheets that I didn't really like. Every other director signed them. So as my stupid act of protest I would sign my name really tiny which if anybody looks back at those model sheets they'll see there's three big names and one really tiny one.

But it got really bad. At that time Brad Bird was trying to get a feature based on "The Spirit" going, which he's still trying to get going ten years later. And it seemed at least slightly possible that it was going to go. So if that was going to go, I was going to quit. That was it, I was out the door.

Obviously you didn't quit, and things didn't get any better on The Black Cauldron. What happened that convinced you to stay?

At one point, Tom Wilhite came to

me and said I want to put you in charge of *Black Cauldron* and kind of get rid of those guys and I said, "Tom, no, don't do it. It's not going to work, even that won't really work, forget it." But they knew people were unhappy and wondered how to mollify the situation. So they hit upon the idea of having another small unit working on another film, so that's when "Basil of Baker Street" [a/k/a *The Great Mouse Detective*] got going.

We story people, like Pete Young, Ron Clements, and Steve Hulett, who were some of the malcontents storywise, at least, were banished to "Basil of Baker Street" to work on that with a small crew. "Basil" had been in work for a while already. I hadn't liked what was done. I wanted to make it a little bit screwier and odder so I started pushing it in kind of a weird direction. We worked on it for maybe five or six months and then Ron Miller, who had been seeing it all along, but not all that often, finally got to a point where he looked at it and said, "What is this? Forget it, start over." Of course I was ready to quit and say forget it, but we started over. We brought in Vance Gerry, who I think is great and did a lot of neat boards on it, and I kind of backed off. I had made it a little bit more Monty Pythony in a way and that was just too weird, and it was probably not such a good idea.

Then they heard that I was still thinking about leaving the studio. So they said we're not going to have this guy in charge of this movie if he's going to leave. They said, "Well, Burny Mattinson should be your co-director because Burny's a traditionalist" and they liked what he did. He'd just finished directing *Mickey's Christmas Carol*. So I said fine and for a while there was me and Burny as co-directors with Ron Miller as the producer.

We had been working on "Basil" for a few years at that point. It was really puttering along as was *Black Cauldron*. Then new management came in, Ron Miller was out, and they said we're going to get going here. Jeffrey Katzenberg [Chairman, Walt Disney Studios] and [Chief Executive] Michael Eisner came in and reviewed the boards. We presented the boards to them and if they didn't like it the plug would have been pulled right there. But they liked it well enough anyway that they said keep going. They said we need a producer on this

and I think they really felt a lot of confidence in Burny so they said, "Burny, you're the producer." So Burny became the producer. Ron Clements was elevated into directing around that point, so it was Burny producing, me, Dave Michner, and Ron directing on it.

Somewhere along the line we moved off the Burbank lot to Glendale and it was really this sort of sink or swim atmosphere where they said you've got to get it done in a year.

So The Great Mouse Detective team pulled it off, and your next directorial job with Ron Clements was of course The Little Mermaid. The story of that film's production has been well documented, so let's move on to your next feature, Aladdin. How does that project differ from Mermaid?

Well, *Little Mermaid* was generated really by Ron Clements. It was his idea to do it. He found the property and brought it to them and said we ought to do this movie. In a way that's the biggest difference. *Aladdin* is a case where, when we were done with *Mermaid*, the studio said we have properties here we'd like you guys to think about - "Aladdin," "King of the Jungle," and "Swan Lake." And we read the scripts and treatments they had.

Howard Ashman and Alan Menken [lyricist and composer of *Little Mermaid* and *Beauty and the Beast*] had already actually been involved in *Aladdin* before we were. While we were working on *Mermaid*, Howard wrote a treatment and songs for *Aladdin*. As part of his original deal with Disney, he had to do another animated film. He was even considering directing it I think. As they developed scripts based on Howard's treatment, there were story things they didn't like. We weren't involved in this, but my sense is from what I've seen is that eventually they said let's just get a story that works, don't worry about working in Howard's songs, we'll worry about the songs later. So they kind of threw Howard's treatment out and started over.

Anyhow, of all those projects, Ron and I liked *Aladdin* best. We read the various scripts that had been done up to that point, listened to Howard's songs, and we really liked Howard's songs, but we thought certain things about it made it too live actiony so we wanted to play up

too live actiony so we wanted to play up the Genie a little bit more. In Howard's version, Aladdin had a couple of friends that tagged along during the story, but they were human characters. We just felt that's going to be hard to animate and it gets us away from Aladdin so we sort of eliminated those characters and added other characters. Jeffrey Katzenberg didn't like our treatments and scripts particularly, but he gave us a fair amount of rope because of **Mermaid**.

Time passed and a year went by. Each step of the way we said, "You may not like this, but you'll like it in the next step. You may not like the treatment, but in the script you'll like it." Jeffrey still had problems with the script. "You may not like the script, but when we board it you'll like it." Then he still had problems with the boards. "You may not like it on boards, but when we put it up on reels you'll like it." Well, we got to the point where we put the whole movie up on story reels, almost exactly a year ago at this time and we showed it to him in its entirety and he really didn't like it, didn't like it at all. He thought it was a debacle. "This does not work. It's all wrong. Start over."

So we went through a pretty bad period a year ago. We were too busy because production was actually still going at that point. We interviewed various live action writers to help us rewrite the script and we settled on Ted Elliot and Terry Rossio who were familiar with animation. We had various story meetings where we re-outlined the story, repitched it to Jeffrey. They went to work rewriting scenes. We worked with them. We would kibitz with them. We refashioned the story with them and still tried to keep production going at the same time. It was very difficult.

At least on **Mermaid** Jeffrey liked the script. That made it easier going through production. Even if he saw something he didn't like, he said, "Well, I like the script so I'll trust you guys on this." In this case, he hadn't liked the script so when he didn't like the reels, that really left him without something to point to that he liked. That was horrendous. I think it is dangerous to go forward with a script that Jeffrey really doesn't seem in sync with, thinking that he was going to buy into it. I think we learned that that's kind of hazardous and you have to hash it

out earlier or get somebody else to do it.

What were some of the specific changes you made as Aladdin developed?

In the earlier script Aladdin had a mother. Howard had written this song called "Proud of Your Boy." Aladdin, who was always kind of screwing up and letting his mother down, said, "I'm going to make good some day." We really liked that song. Well, when we showed the reels to Jeffrey, it was like this doesn't work. Mom, she's a zero. And we had heard complaints from other people that had been working on the film - it was like, "Kill the mom." We showed the reels to the staff and even the staff didn't like it that well. It didn't seem to be engaging enough emotionally.

So we said in the rewritten version let's get rid of Mom so we can focus on Aladdin. This was after Howard had died so in terms of the new story elements that were going to be dictated by this new approach, we needed new songs. Alan initially wrote one song by himself, words and lyrics, but I think he felt like he was getting stretched too thin because he was working on **Newsies**. We thought he should really work with a lyricist so Tim Rice came into the project then and he did songs with Alan. Tim had been involved in the Dolly Parton movie **Straight Talk** a little bit. Management was impressed with him and they wanted to get Tim involved in animation. Alan met with him and they hit it off well enough so there's a couple songs that Tim and Alan have written that will be in there, as well as songs by Howard and Alan.

How has working on Aladdin been easier or more difficult than Little Mermaid?

It's easier in the sense that we've been through **Mermaid** now. We have a little more experience so we know more about post production and just getting the movie done. And I think the whole animation staff is better in general. I think all the animators are better. The clean-up artists are better. The layout artists are better. Each picture has helped. Ron and I skipped a few pictures, but while we were skipping, people were working on **The Rescuers Down Under** and because of both Mike Gabriel and Hendel Butoy [directors of **The Rescuers Down Under**] and the layout team they put to-

gether, their staging was much better than **Mermaid**'s was. It really came up from where we were. We, of course, can't take any credit for that. So we inherited a more developed staff as we got on **Aladdin**, and we were trying to almost keep up with them in a way. I think there will be a higher degree of artistic skill compared to **Mermaid**.

The big change for us was doing **Aladdin** without Howard Ashman. Howard was gone [he died of AIDS in March, 1991] and he was such a big part of **Mermaid**. It's really sad for us not to work with him and I know it would be a different movie if Howard was here because there's been all sorts of musical questions as we've been going through it. Alan's more on his own than he was on **Beauty and the Beast** and so are we and that's been a challenge for us. I mean, we still have some link in that Howard did write a few of the songs. He liked our original script. And that's been really hard. Howard wasn't just a lyricist. I mean, he really was involved in the conception on **Beauty and the Beast**. I don't know that it's been explained how heavily Howard was involved in reshaping that story. A few years ago Ron and I were in a meeting when they were changing the story. They had done the story to a certain point and again Jeffrey said, "I hate this. This isn't working, start over." And Howard got pulled in. They tried to pull us into it. We said we're too tired from **Mermaid**, this is too much like **Mermaid**, we don't want to be involved but we will come to this meeting, and Howard changed that whole thing around. He said let's make Gaston this big male chauvinist. He was a fop in the earlier treatments, but he wasn't this burly chauvinist. That was all Howard's thinking. Gaston was a hunter - Howard's idea. Belle liked books - Howard's idea. And you can name it. There are any number of things. Not to take anything away from [Beauty and the Beast directors] Kirk Wise and Gary Trousdale because Howard was too sick. He wasn't really involved in making the movie itself and Kirk and Gary did it and they really deserve all the credit. But many of the conceptions were Howard's.

Now I think there would have been conceptual things on **Aladdin** too that Howard would have argued with us about,



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been healthier, and as it is there are still some ideas from his original conceptions and his earlier treatment that we're using. So it's just an absolute tragedy that we don't have Howard. He was difficult to work with because he was so passionate and stubborn about what he believed in, but the up side of that was that he put so much thought and really so much heart and emotion into it, that we learned so much from him. I think we still have a lot more to learn so it was a huge loss for us.

Tell us about the character of the Genie in Aladdin.

He's played very comically. Robin Williams is doing the voice. When we read the various treatments of the script, we felt like there wasn't enough Genie in it. So when we redid the story, we tried to get more of the Genie into it. We also wanted to take advantage of Robin's mercurial nature. We wrote the script with Robin in mind. We just felt that we could get all these sort of quick changes - and I'm sure we were influenced at least obliquely by "Back to Neverland" [the explanatory short at the Disney-MGM Stu-

dios Tour] where Robin had done a voice. Although we were trying not to be derivative of that.

From what you're saying it sounds as if Aladdin is very much a comedy.

Because of Robin and the nature of the story, yes. We saw it in terms of tone a little bit more like **Back to the Future**, where there's sort of a slightly serious element underneath it, but it has a little bit of breeziness to it. It isn't quite so life or death, for better or worse. It has a more comic tone than **Beauty and the Beast** or **Mermaid**. It's more of a comedy. So in a way it has elements of "Basil," which we always thought of as a comedy, but it's got romance elements to it as well. Aladdin falls in love with the princess so there's a romantic story, there's an adventure story, Aladdin against the bad guy, the Vizier, who's a two-faced, right-hand man to the sultan. We're trying to keep all three balls — action-adventure, romance, comedy — in the air during the movie.

Certainly the Genie carries the brunt of the comedy, but we're hoping there's

going to be a good mixture of verbal humor and physical humor so that both adults and kids will enjoy it.

What are some of the elements that make Aladdin unique?

There's a flying carpet character in it who we've given a personality. And we've used computer texture mapping on him to get this elaborate sort of Persian pattern, but the character animation is done traditionally, so in a way it's the first time in a Disney feature where there's a computer generated character, and not just a moving cart or carriage. It's more like a John Lasseter/Pixar character that we're trying to wed into this film. So I think that'll be novel. Randy Cartwright is doing the carpet, he's doing a good job with it, really bringing it to life. It really

is looking good, I think.

In terms of style and design, how does Aladdin compare to other Disney features?

I would say this movie is cartoonier. We wanted to get a more designy look to this film so Eric Goldberg, who wanted cartooniness/designiness in the designs, was one of the first animators on this. He's doing the Genie. He designed him with some Hirschfeld influence. All the characters have a bit of a 2D Hirschfeld quality. Richard Vander Wende, who's the production designer, does these sort of two-dimensional designs but lays all this 3D rendering on them. So it's a strange mix of 2D and 3D. We wanted the characters to have some of that same feeling so it came out off Richard's background paintings which, again, he did before we ever got on the project while it was in development. He was doing paintings for the earlier versions of the script which we really liked. So we tried to key the characters' relating to the background such that they have 2D design. They're more geometric shapes in terms of just

basic pattern things. I haven't seen much at all of Richard Williams' film, **The Cobbler and the Thief**. I think his is further in that direction. It's really patterny, really 2D designy. This is not as extreme as that at all. It has more of that than **Beauty and the Beast** or **Mermaid** had in terms of a designed aspect to it, such that the trees have a sort of a geometric aspect.

In what ways does Aladdin push the boundaries of Disney animation?

In terms of a lead male character, we're trying to do things that haven't been done before. We're trying to get more dimension than Eric ever had in **Mermaid**. We're trying to get more than Peter Pan had. If you go down the list, Peter Pan, Wart, Taran, Mowgli - Mowgli may actually be one of the best of that bunch - they were not very strong characters. The big challenge is to get the male lead character that's strong.

Beyond that, I think we're trying to get a tone that's slightly different, that incorporates comedy and yet you can keep the sincerity of the story in a way that hasn't been done too much before. We're trying to sort of play it both ways. Whether or not we're successful, we'll see. Again, on a technical level, just the sort of the carpet and the computer animation that we're using. And some of the computer generated backgrounds, we have other sequences that use them, that are pushing the envelope technologically.

Stylistically we're trying to get something where it actually has a distinctive sort of look to it, both in the characters and the background. That's really hard to do in a big production system and with all the hands that are involved in it, ourselves included. That'll be a challenge on this one, just on an aesthetic level, to have it wed together in one piece which is really hard. And then just getting it done in the amount of time we have. This is less time than we had on **Mermaid**. It's a year less than we had on **Mermaid**. And we're really heading into a nightmare period right now of having to go faster. So ask me when the movie's finished, if my hair isn't completely gray by then, which it is now anyway.

You mentioned that Aladdin is a male hero, which certainly sets this picture apart from most other Disney features that center on female leads.

With the success of **Beauty and the Beast** I think you'll see a lot more Disney heroines, too. I'd say male characters, as we discovered on **Aladdin**, and we discovered somewhat on **Mermaid**, are really hard. Eric was a secondary character in **Mermaid** — Ariel was the dominant one. In this, the roles are reversed. Aladdin's the dominant one, and the success or failure of this movie will depend on how well he comes across. Glen Keane's the supervising animator on **Aladdin** and we've had discussions in terms of how cartoony versus how realistic he has to be. He has to carry a romance story as well as the story of coming of age.

I think males are harder to animate, they're harder to design, and harder than women, I don't know why exactly, but they are. We have shot live action on this film again as a help, which they're using just as a jumping off point, but it is really hard to get somebody right in that age range, you know, like 16 or 17, who doesn't look too young, doesn't look too old, doesn't look too realistic, doesn't look too this or too that. His voice is done by an actor named Scott Winger. He's sort of a semi-Kirk Cameron, young leading man, what you'd call a teen idol kind of a guy.

We want Aladdin to be an underdog. He's a poor kid and the society around him says you're poor, you're worthless. He says, "No, I'm not, I mean something, I count for something," but deep down he's not so sure. And so part of this story is him trying to overcome his own insecurities and say that I don't have to be rich to be accepted by people or accepted by myself. If I can accept myself, value myself, it doesn't matter if I'm rich or poor. And that's part of the underlying theme.

It's like **Beauty and the Beast** somewhat: It's not what's on the outside, it's what's on the inside. But it's really hard bringing this guy to life. It's been a challenge that way.

Counting The Great Mouse Detective, Aladdin marks your third directorial collaboration with Ron Clements. Can you tell us about your working relationship?

When we were working on the script, Ron tended to be more structural and I was more sort of detailed oriented, so I

think we kind of complemented each other that way. In production, I tend to do some of the more action set pieces just because I think my staging is a little more hyped up than Ron's is. Ron tends to do more of those sequences with sincerity, warmth, acting, emotion because he's really good at that. I think, as I say, this one's trickier because Ron didn't engender this project. So we both are having to hack our way through it. Certainly when our story got shot down in flames a year ago, we went through a pretty wobbly period. We thought, "What is good, what is bad?" It was very depressing and trying for both of us.

I think Ron is more stubborn than I am. The good thing about Ron is that if he thinks something works, even in the face of a lot of people saying this is wrong, he'll defend it tenaciously and won't blow with the wind. I'm more bendable and malleable in my own way, though other people might not think so. He does a better job of hanging onto things than I do. I'm more inclined to go sometimes with the more recent idea. So I think we're sort of "good cop-bad cop." He'll more tenaciously hang onto things so that the story doesn't sort of disintegrate while you're working on it. On the other hand, I may challenge things a little bit more, be willing to go along with new ideas and confront him with "Why not, this is better to do it this way?"

So there's a dialog, a back and forth thing there. We divide the movie up into sequences, so he does some sequences and I do others. We each have our own autonomy in a way which makes it easier so that it's more fun for us in that we're not having to get each other to agree on everything. We're both basically easygoing I think despite our other tendencies. So personality-wise, I think, we get along well enough that if he feels strongly about something, if it's not a big deal to me, I back off and vice versa. Just kind of haggle our way through it.

I know other directors at Disney where they have two directors have done it differently, where they both do everything. And we just felt like it would go through production faster to sort of actually divide it up into sequences.

What are your hopes and expectations for Aladdin when it's released?

I hope people like it - I hope they go



see it! We've had some tests and they've gone well. I hope it's involving, engaging, and I hope we don't get a lot of reviews that say, "Oh, well, **Beauty and the Beast** was great but..." I hope it does well at the box office, but I don't have any monetary figure in my head.

I think it's a different sort of movie from **Beauty and the Beast** so I don't know. In a way, it's more of a boy's movie. When we were first going on this, Jeffrey said, "Hey, it's a boy's movie, that's great." Because originally, of course, on **Mermaid** when we had our first test screening for some kids they said this is a girl's movie, it's not going to do very well, only girls are going to go see **Little Mermaid**, nobody else is going to see it. "It's okay, we know that, it's not going to do as well as **Oliver and Company**." That's what they told us. And we were disappointed. Of course, they were completely wrong. But then the unfortunate flipside is that hey, it's a fact of life that men's movies, a la action movies, always do better than women's movies. So that's a good thing. We were thinking this could do even better than **Mermaid**. This was before **Beauty and the Beast** came out.

Of course, I think we're fighting a prejudice here in that most animated films really are seen by women and children. There aren't that many fathers that go, there aren't that many single guys certainly that go to animated films. There are dates that go to it and that went up with **Beauty and the Beast**. I think this may be a little less of a date movie. But

it's a question of can we get men in the audience who figure it's more of a boy's movie, quote-unquote, and at the same time, is there not enough heart, romance, whatever, so that mothers bringing their children won't say it was okay, and not really like it that much.

As a consequence it may not do as well. I think that's a pretty real possibility. Animation is perceived as a kid thing, that's something the wife takes the kids to on a Saturday and the husband plays golf or watches sports on TV. We have to fight that prejudice. I think **Beauty and the Beast** did better than **Mermaid** as far as being a crossover movie where they got more adult audience than **Mermaid** did. Quite a bit obviously by the box office. I hope we can work with the audience they got on that, but it's certainly no sure thing. If it's a movie that people don't want to go see it, they're not going to go see it.

Great Mouse Detective just came out again. I don't think the marketing was wonderful. I don't think the time of release was wonderful, but despite that, I think it is not a movie that the general public was clamoring to see.

It wasn't something that by its title, by what they could see of it, looked like something that as an adult they could get anything out of. And I hope they market this in a way that it looks like adults could get something out of it, which I think they can.

We still tried to make this as a movie that we would be entertained by and enjoy. I'm hoping that adults will go see it.

I hope it'll attract a general audience, adults as well as kids. It's no sure thing, though.

*It does seem that with **Aladdin** you're in a unique position because you have to not only live up to the success of **The Little Mermaid** but also **Beauty and the Beast**.*

It killed us last November when we were at the wrap party for **Beauty and the Beast** because we were just dying. We were like, "Oh, man, we've got to follow this thing?" This was before the Academy's Best Picture nomination - even before it made any money, just looking at it, seeing that reaction. We were just cringing because we knew we were going to be compared to it. They showed it to employees, not even the animation staff, just some of the people that worked on the lot in Burbank and they gave it a standing ovation. We just said, "Well, we'll plod ahead and try to make this as good as we can." But it's not going to be the same kind of movie.

I do think **Aladdin** by its nature is a lighter movie, not as emotional. By design, it's cartoonier. By the nature of the original story material, it's more of an action-adventure movie. It's more of a comedy.

The original story doesn't have the basic emotional thread that the original **Beauty and the Beast** story does. So I think if you don't expect exactly the same thing, you may not be disappointed. If you're looking for that same level of emotional involvement, I don't think it's quite going to be there. But we'll see.

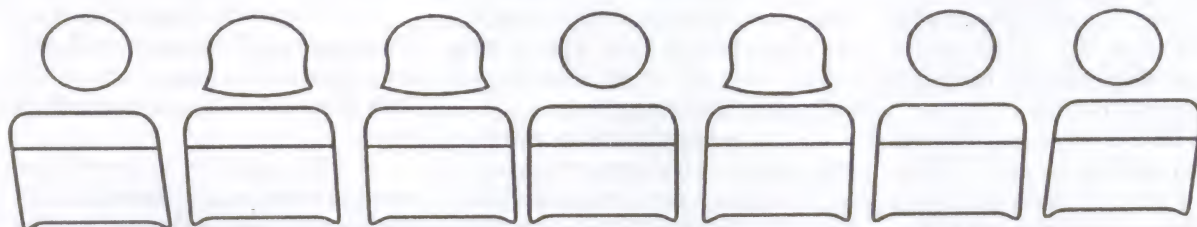
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Behind the Scenes with the Kroyers and the staff of **FERNGULLY...THE LAST RAINFOREST**



by *Jim Fanning*

FernGully...The Last Rainforest has a unique positioning as a mainstream G-rated "family entertainment" in the classical mode but with an eclectic twist and a contemporary edge that sets it apart from the typical Disney, Spielberg or Bluth animated product.

The unique flavor of this animated allegory about humankind's duel role as destroyer/protector of the Earth, released in April 1992, comes in part from the fresh voice talent (Robin Williams, Christian Slater, Samantha Mathis, Tim Curry), and the unusual choice of musical talent including Thomas Dolby, Sheena Easton, Elton John, Tone-Loc and Raffi — but much of **FernGully's** contemporary feel springs from the creative sensibilities of Kroyer Films, Inc., the animation studio founded and run by the husband-and-wife team of Director Bill Kroyer and Creative Director Sue Kroyer.

Since its inception in 1986, Kroyer Films has produced such novel animated pieces as the title sequences for **Honey, I Shrunk the Kids** and **National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation**, Epcot Center's "The Making of Me," and the

Academy Award-nominated short **Technological Threat** -- all with a fresh, innovative style

It was Kroyer Films' status as a small but sharp animation studio that led to its involvement with **FernGully**. "In 1989," Sue Kroyer remembers, "Wayne Young, one of **FernGully's** producers [and associate producer of the live action hit, **Crocodile Dundee**], came to us on a recommendation from Jim Cox [**FernGully's** screenwriter, who also wrote Disney's **Oliver and Company** and **The Rescuers Down Under**] that we be the animation production company involved in **FernGully**. They had initially used another company to do some developmental designs and they weren't really happy with them, so they decided that they were looking for a small studio that was hungry, and we fit the bill."

The first order of business for the Kroyers and their key creative team was not drawing but flying — to Australia in February, 1990, on a far-flung field trip into the rainforest for some hands-on research. "Before we went I actually thought it would be possible to just use research," admits Sue Kroyer, "but after

we went I realized there was no way we could have done this film without being in the rainforest."

The troupe of artists were headquartered in a makeshift art studio in Byron Bay, a jumping off point to several rainforests on the northeastern coast of Australia. "We took thousands of pictures, did paintings, sketches, and really came up with all the basics of the movie, the designs, the look," explains Bill Kroyer. "I think too much animation is regurgitated interpretations of previous animation. Animation needs to come from life, like any art."

"We tried to stay very authentic [to the natural environment]," Kroyer continues, "because we wanted, as a subtext to the movie, to preserve the real magic of the real place. We didn't want to create some wild animation designs because when we were there, the reality of the rainforest is more wild and crazy and fun and beautiful than anything you could dream up. There was really no need to invent anything. The trick was to observe and find a way to present it in an entertaining way."

The environmental theme of

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FernGully was the driving force behind the project since its inception ten years ago. Producer Young brought the idea of developing the original tales of Diana Young to FAI Films, a subsidiary of FAI Insurance, one of Australia's largest insurance companies, which has a particular dedication to conservation issues. The rainforest was obviously the heart of the whole project, and its design and animation was a crucial consideration.

"We knew that the forest was one of the stars of the movie," explains Sue Kroyer. "It was going to be a very delicate balance between having it be overpowering or having it recede into the background and be non-existent. It was very important for us to have the forest as a living, breathing entity and not do it with pop, bright colors that would knock your eyes out."

"To me, the real star of the movie is the art direction [by Ralph Eggleston and Victoria Jonson]," asserts Tony Fucile, **FernGully's** animation director and, with Dan Jeup, character design supervisor. "Ralph pretty much masterminded the grand scheme of color. It's like a great musical score in that you don't see it when you're watching it—you feel it. It's a beautifully orchestrated thing."

"The backgrounds can look great and that's fine," says Ralph Eggleston of **FernGully's** backgrounds which were executed under the supervision of Dennis Venizelos, "but it's still background. You've got to make the characters the most important thing. We tried to spotlight the characters, to make sure the main characters were a little more rich than anything else in the frame."

"We tried to keep a simplicity in the picture," adds Fucile, "because we thought the characters needed to have kind of a graphic, simple, fun style that

would fit with the lush rainforest backdrop."

"We wanted real-looking caricatures," states Sue Kroyer of the **FernGully** characters. "We didn't want to go super realistic but we didn't want to go real cartoony, either. We didn't want to go very designy because then it's hard to tell a story for 70 minutes. So we wanted fairly simple shapes that could be squashed and stretched."

The main challenge for seemingly everyone at Kroyer Films may have been the central "fairy" concept. "Oh, boy,



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were we paranoid about that," says Ralph Eggleston. "I mean, nobody wants to animate friggin' fairies. It sounded so cutesy-wootsey, so we went out of our way to find funny things."

FernGully centers on the lore of the beings author Diana Young called fairies and the Kroyer crew prefers to call spirits. "They are really an allegorical force," explains Bill Kroyer, "personifications of the growing, living forest, the positive force within nature. Rather than making the trees or leaves talk, we personified them symbolically as creatures."

"We wanted to get away from these sylph-like, gliding, ethereal beings," explains Sue Kroyer. "We said among ourselves the only way we're going to do

a film about fairies is if we can make this little race of really cool, believable beings that really look like they'd be in the forest." This led to the design of Pips, Crysta's suitor, as virile and athletic, while for Crysta herself — **FernGully's** protagonist — Team Kroyer strove for a particular look. "We wanted someone who was a little more ethnic looking," explains Sue Kroyer. "We didn't want a blah Tinker Bell. We wanted somebody who looked like she lived in the forest — her hair is kind of messy. Tony Fucile drew her the very first day — except for a modified hair length, her design came about the first day. Tony had a feeling for exactly what he wanted, he really thought about it a lot, so the first thing right out of his wrist was what the character was going to look like."

When it comes to the mostly human or human-like characters who populate **FernGully**, Sue Kroyer says the animators' work is "really significant because unlike Disney we did not use live action reference. We tried to make sure that the characters had original acting. I feel the acting in our film is unique. It's something that's not derivative of live action, not taken off one actor. I

think we should have used live action reference on some of the runs because some of them are pretty weak. But I think in our character animation the acting's stronger because we didn't do it."

"Because our characters actually talk to each other, and have emotions, jealousy, fear, wonder, we animated them in conversations that were more naturalistic," elaborates Bill Kroyer. "I think that is a big step for animation because it's always gone to the one-note cliché where a character is only one thing and never changes."

"People have a one-formula idea of how an animated film is supposed to be. If you vary from that formula, it will be noticed and people will think they've

picked out a flaw in your movie. I'd like to be able to have animation be perceived and executed in a broader palette than just this laugh-a-minute, musical cartoon fun fest. We didn't make a laugh-a-minute musical. As a matter of fact, the last third of the movie is pretty serious stuff. And some people have a problem with that."

If Kroyer Films has produced a unique animated product in **FernGully**, it is perhaps due to the company being, to use Sue Kroyer's term, "artist-driven." "The way Bill and Sue run a studio is the way I want to see a studio run," states Dori Littell Herrick, Kroyer's Assistant Animation Supervisor and an animation veteran of fourteen years. "I've tried to manage at other places where there's all these laid down rules and if you're not in at eight o'clock sharp then you're in trouble. I can't work that way. A big piece of why the picture looks as good as it does is that everybody felt like they had a place in the company, that they were treated as responsible human beings, and what they contributed was important. We have the new management style here. After all, you can't cheat on this job — either you've done the drawings or you haven't — so you don't have to beat people to get work out. The other big feature animation producer — and we all know who it is — beats people to get work out of them. And you don't have to work that way to get people to work responsibly."

"We would pitch the boards to the entire studio," says story supervisor Tom Mazzocco, who has also worked for Filmation, Hyperion and Disney, describing how everyone on the picture had opportunities to contribute. "We'd get input from the other artists in the studio as to whether they thought it flowed well or was touching or funny enough, or whatever. **FernGully**, more than any other project I've worked on, has been a collaborative effort throughout."

Another unifying factor for the Kroyer artists was their shared passion for the ecological theme of the **FernGully** project. "It was nice to come and work on a project that agreed with my political feelings, my way of looking at the world," says Littell Herrick. "I think everyone felt strongly about the environmental issue, which made it good."

"We definitely thought when we

were in Australia that we wanted to make a film that would affect this generation of kids the way **Bambi** affected our generation," says Sue Kroyer. "In my opinion, it was a great honor to be offered the chance to say something to the entire world. And it was also a great honor to work on an animated film that said something because most animated films are just puff pieces that make everybody laugh. We wanted to make sure we weren't so heavy-handed that we beat everybody over the head with this message, but we also didn't want to pull our punches. We wanted to make a strong statement."

FernGully takes a stand on a political issue," observes Tony Fucile. "Other studios avoid anything that would be even remotely controversial." Coming at a time when public concern for the environment and especially the rainforests has reached an all time high, **FernGully** has the opportunity to make a difference. The film was screened for the General Assembly of the United Nations on Earth Day, and proceeds of the film will benefit The Sierra Club, The Rainforest Foundation, Greenpeace and a special fund that will be administered by The Smithsonian Institution to benefit environmental projects throughout the world.

"Of course, with the typical cynical humor among animators," laughs Sue Kroyer, "we figured we cut down an entire forest to make this film. Actually we tried to get recycled paper but it was impossible. We did recycle all the paper that we used, so we weren't really that environmentally damaging."

Global concerns came honestly to the internationally-oriented production. In order to meet the severe deadlines (**FernGully** was originally scheduled for release in November 1991), Kroyer Films had to swell practically overnight from a cozy company with a staff of fifteen to over one hundred in Los Angeles alone with an additional sixty people in Toronto (Karen Johnson Productions Toronto, run by Sue Kroyer's sister), Copenhagen (A-Film), London (Ulimation), Korea (Time Art Studios) and Thailand (Siam Mammoth Animation).

"We had animators all over the world, we had very limited time, a limited budget," observes Dan Jeup. "My hat's off to Bill and Sue for really staying with it and

being strong, for overcoming the organizational problems of setting up the studio."

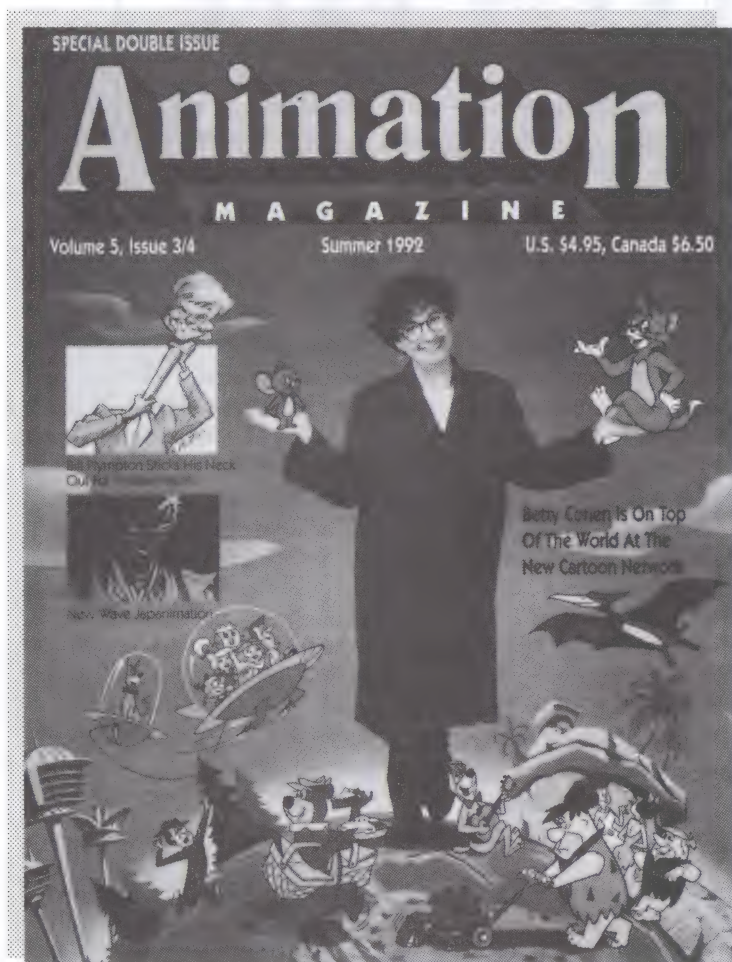
Sue Kroyer attributes much of the company's ability to pull off the project to her husband. "He's an amazing and strong individual," she says simply. "Bill has the power to pull a chain of disbelieving people behind him. He had to overcome tremendous hurdles making this film." Aside from the challenge of starting the picture without pre-production and gathering a staff during ongoing production, Sue reveals that, "we also did not have a completed script when we started storyboarding. Bill had the vision to have the whole film in his mind. He not only knew every scene in the picture, he knew every level of every scene. He has a tremendously organized and mathematical mind, yet he also has tremendous vision and insight."

The future of Kroyer Films in animated features depends at least partially on how well **FernGully** is received, not only at the box office but on videocassette and in the minds of the movie industry's movers-and-shakers. Kroyer currently has a film noir-type detective movie called "Arrow" in development with Joel Silver Productions and Warner Bros. "It's very different," says Sue Kroyer. "We like to get projects that are pretty different from what we just did." Asked about a "Kroyer style" as in a Disney style or a Bluth style, Sue Kroyer replies, "I wouldn't want to say what it is. Every project that we've done, we did whatever we felt was right for the job. We have had some very different art direction on our different jobs and each one of them was right for that particular job. I would never want to be held down to repeating ourselves. We might want to do a limited thing sometime or something that looks really UPA. If there is a Kroyer style, it's that it looks great."

Speaking of the future of feature animation, Sue Kroyer says, "We just want to keep going. We're a good team and we have great synergy. I think it's fun that there's a lot of competition, a lot of different animation companies. It's a boom time. So not only is **FernGully** in the right place at the right time but I think our company's in the right place at the right time, too. It's a good time to be in animation."

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TAPES ON TAPE

A VIDEO COLUMN BY MATTHEW HASSON

by Matthew Hasson

As more and more animation collections become available on tape and laserdisc, it is heartening to find that there is at least one company that really cares about putting out the best quality product possible and not just a slap dash thrown together collection. The tapes I review this column are all from Bosko Video and, if you are interested in the subject matter, are all highly recommended.

Golden Anniversary Edition: The Complete Superman collection volumes 1 and 2

For decades, these 1940s Superman cartoons have been out of general circulation due to copyright squabbles between comic publishers and film distributors, but recently they have been enjoying a well deserved revival. Hot on the heels of the laser disc collection reviewed last issue comes an even better VHS version of the 17 Superman titles produced by Max Fleicher and Famous Studios.

These prints were taken from the best available master copies and the quality really shows. Even **Terror on the Midway** has been remastered and is complete and unedited, unlike the laserdisc version. (On the disc a panning shot of the circus at the beginning is substituted with still frames.) All films are letterboxed with Hi-Fi sound and there is no skimping on the titles for you completists. For some reason, the laserdisc collection would end each film a little sooner than normal to avoid showing the Paramount logo, despite the fact that it appeared at the beginning of each film. If you happen to already have one of the old, faded public domain tapes of this series it is almost startling to compare the quality of the new prints on these volumes. There is more depth to the sound and a richer

range of colors.

Each tape has a printed prologue with an informative history of the making of the Superman series. All cartoons are presented in chronological order with the original date of release superimposed briefly at the beginning of each episode.

In conclusion, this is one of those cases where a VHS version outranks the laserdisc. Laserdisc aficionados might sniff at this, but only this Bosko Video version is letterboxed. Superior liner notes and box art are a plus as well as the omission of the unnecessary Snafuperman. In my opinion, this is the best and only Superman collection a fan should own.

The Complete Flip the Frog Collection volume 1

This is the first of five volumes of Ub Iwerks' attempts to create his own Mickey Mouse but without the guidance and imagination of his former partner Walt Disney. Although Iwerks is remembered for his animation on the early Mickeys and his technical wizardry, as a film producer he falls flat in the area of gags and story. However, he had a talented staff who managed to create a few memorable shorts. Among them were Shamus Culhane, Grim Natwick, Frank Tashlin and future WB music director Carl Stallring, who defected with Iwerks from the Disney studio. Also on the staff was a young Chuck Jones whose job it was to wash the drawings off the animation cels to reuse later, so if you're wondering why there are no Flip the Frog cels available on the collector's market, blame him!

This release marks the video debut of Flip whose films have not been available to TV since the '50s and is consistently one of animation's forgotten stars. Like most recent releases from Bosko, this edition is letterboxed or "matted" in

this case since it is in fact a square picture reduced to the proper screen size rather than a rectangular wide-screen film. The prints used are from the best available sources and easily surpasses any previous Ub Iwerks collections, although the only one I've heard of is a Video Dimensions collection that came out several years ago.

Like most cartoons of the '30s, these contain offensive ethnic stereotypes that are totally taboo by today's politically correct standards. Flip and other characters also say "Damn!" frequently and in **Chinaman's Chance**, Flip smokes dope in an opium den while playing the part of a police officer. Neither of these hijinks would have gotten past the decency codes of the Hayes office in later years.

Volume one opens with **Fiddlesticks**, Flip's debut film and made in two tone Technicolor, predating Disney's full color **Flowers and Trees** by two years. **Fiddlesticks** has a pointless pilot film that plays like one of Disney's more forgettable Silly Symphonies, with Flip dancing and playing piano with his animal friends for seven minutes. Accompanying him on piano is a mouse wearing red shorts, but otherwise does not look too much like another famous cartoon mouse Iwerks used to animate. There is no dialogue in **Fiddlesticks** though Flip quacks like a duck several times.

His appearance would change over the next couple of films from an average looking frog who lives in a pond to a hybrid character with a humanoid body and a frog's head. His wardrobe in the first film consists of a bow tie and three buttons sewn onto his chest (!).

The remaining films on volume one are in black and white. **The Cuckoo Murder Case** has the revised design of Flip and he now speaks in a voice that sounds halfway between Mickey Mouse

and Bosko. As "Sherlock Flip" he investigates a murder scene that happens to be at a haunted house (Where else?).

This cartoon is very similar to the Mickey Mouse short *Haunted House*, with Flip meeting a gang of dancing skeletons in the basement, complete with Carl Stalling's music from *The Skeleton Dance*. After numerous scary encounters, Flip finds the murderer who turns out to be none other than the Grim Reaper, and Flip is the next target in his appointment book.

The film ends with Flip running down a corridor and falling through a doorway that empties into empty blackness. An unfunny gag that features a police car using a howling cat for a siren is used twice, apparently as a filler.

Funny Face may be the best film in the series. Flip has a human girlfriend who is a Betty Boop lookalike (probably animated by Grim Natwick). She dumps the frog for a new human boyfriend who also looks like Betty Boop. Heartbroken, Flip decides to visit a plastic surgeon to get rid of his frog face. The face he replaces it with looks just like Buddy, the future Warner Brothers character.

The Frankensteinian result is an undersized human head with no neck mounted on Flip's torso, which is half human, half frog. Convinced that this is the look that will win his girlfriend back, Flip sets out to find her. While searching he is chased by a group of infatuated young girls who simply cannot resist this strange boy-frog mutation. (Speaking of mutations, it should be noted that Flip's girlfriend has webbed fingers.) He eventually finds and rescues her from the neighborhood bully, but his plastic face is knocked off during the fight. Happily, his girlfriend decides she prefers frogs after all.

As mentioned earlier, this series does not quite rank up there with the product that was coming out of the Fleischer, Disney and Warner Brother studios of the period. The occasional gem is far outnumbered by bland music and meandering story lines, and the casual animation fan may get bored with this after a while. But for students of animation and collectors who never have seen a Flip the Frog cartoon or anything else from the Ub Iwerks studio, this tasteful collection is a good place to start.

Classic Cartoon Christmas Treasures

Here is an assortment of Christmas theme cartoons made between 1932 and 1957. All are relatively obscure and most have not appeared on television.

The collection opens with the rather overlong story from Britain's Halas and Batchelor studio called **The Candlemaker**. It's about a little boy learning his father's candlemaking craft and a special set of candles he must make for his church for Christmas mass. It emphasizes the religious aspect of Christmas and is about as interesting as an episode of *Davey and Goliath*.

Picking up the pace a bit is **Toys Will be Toys** from Famous studios. Most animation fans are familiar with the many cartoons from Warner and MGM about objects in stores coming to life at night such as *Goofy Groceries* and *Bottles*. This fits into the same category only it's done Famous Studios style with Winston Sharple's music and a cameo appearance from Popeye.

Next up is an old Van Buren cartoon, **Toyland Caper**, featuring the nameless Mickey and Minnie Mouse clones who later became the subject of a lawsuit. (One thing that makes them different in this one is they have no clothes on, not even the customary white gloves. The female mouse is distinguished only by a ribbon on top of her head. Like most Disney wanna-be's of the period, they sing and dance aimlessly through a toy store for seven minutes and then stop.

Two more entries from Famous are included: **Santa's Surprise** and **Hector's Hectic Life**. The former is a Little Audrey entry with Audrey and her friends stowing away on Santa's sleigh and "doing something nice for Santa" while he's asleep. Each of her friends is of a different nationality and helps Santa in his or her own way. The idea of world brotherhood is shattered as the Chinese kid does Santa's laundry and the African child shine his boots. (This was made in 1947 and most other studios were steering away from those old stereotypes by that time.) **Hector's Hectic Life** is about a dog who gets three mischievous puppies for a Christmas present - and he's not even married!

Star of Bethlehem is another straightforward story about the birth of

Christ but this is portrayed entirely in silhouettes. Yes, paper cut silhouettes for the whole film! This was produced in Canada by animation pioneer Lotte Reiniger, who made a whole series of silhouette films. It's an interesting novelty, but not without its technical shortcomings. Bright and colorful backgrounds provide a strange contrast to the featureless silhouetted main characters. This is actually stop frame animation, featuring characters with flexible limbs with hinges that are fairly mobile down to their fingers but are "a trifle pixillated." They tend to tremble and jitter constantly. It looks like either it was a very cold night in Bethlehem, or Joseph and Mary had too much coffee for breakfast.

The Christmas Visitor is another entry from the Halas/Batchelor studio and borrows heavily from the UPA style. Dolls of hero and villain characters fight and chase each other under the Christmas tree while Santa takes a cigarette break.

Finishing off the collection is the Fleischer classic, **Christmas Comes But Once a Year** starring Grampy. This is probably the most familiar cartoon on here, having previously appeared on some poor quality public domain video collections. The quality of this print is superior, being relatively clean and scratch-free, but not quite up to the Superman collection standards, and more like the collections found on *Disney's Fabulous Fleischer Follies*. The story is set in an orphanage where all the children look like Campbell Soup Kids and it looks as if they won't be getting anything for Christmas. Enter Grampy as Santa Claus, a part he was born to play, and he turns common kitchen utensils into Christmas toys. (How will they cook Christmas dinner now?!) This would probably not be aired today because some of the "toys" are actually dangerous electrical appliances, so kids, don't try this at home.

This Christmas collection spans several years and studios and it is interesting to see these obscure and unusual films that normally would not find a place in today's market. Christmas themed cartoons from the golden age are not as common as one would think. Most studios just made one or two and then would just reissue them every year. Quite a contrast to the glut of made for TV holiday specials that fill the airwaves now.



KOKO KOMMENTS

by G. Michael Dobbs

One of the most-asked questions about Max and Dave Fleischer concerns what the brothers did after their ouster from the Fleischer Studios in 1942. One part of the answer to "whatever happened to..." now has surfaced on video.

In April of 1942, Dave Fleischer resigned from the Fleischer Studio to head the cartoon unit at Columbia Pictures. By 1942, Columbia had transformed itself from a struggling Poverty Row studio into a highly respected movie-making company. Columbia was the home of director Frank Capra, and, in the Forties, had Rita Hayworth under contract, one of the era's hottest female stars. Columbia was still not in the same economic league as Warner Brothers, Paramount or MGM as the company did not have the extensive theater chains those studios maintained.

Unlike its feature film production, Columbia had not seen tremendous growth in its cartoon production. Like most of the other studios, it had long-time animation activity. Unlike most other studios, by 1942, it still had not made its mark with audiences. The company had released some of Disney's early efforts, but an alleged clash between Disney and Columbia boss Harry Cohn led to Disney accepting a releasing contract through RKO.

Through the Thirties and into the Forties a parade of now-obscure cartoons were released by Columbia, including the "Scrappy" series and a new incarnation of George Herriman's Krazy Kat. Nothing really clicked with audiences from the animation studio known as Screen Gems except for the relative success of director Frank Tashlin's "The Fox and the Crow."

So when Dave Fleischer accepted the new position as Screen

Gem's Head of Production, perhaps the powers-that-be at Columbia had hoped some of the Fleischer success would rub off.

One of the first new series begun under Fleischer's regime is now available on video. Screen Gems released five cartoons from 1944 to 1945 based on Al Capp's "Li'L Abner" comic strip. All five are now presented on a new tape from RCA/Columbia home video.

If you're an animation completist or if you're very curious, then watching this tape is a necessity. If you do not fall within either group, then this tape may be too much for you. Simply put, the cartoons were awful.

Adapting comic strips characters into animation is a time-honored approach. William Randolph Hearst opened an animation studio prior to World War One to transform many of the beloved King Features comic strips into cartoons. Mutt and Jeff, Krazy Kat, Maggie and Jiggs were just a few of the comic strips characters to have a career in cartoons.

Bringing an established character to the screen had a lot of liabilities and advantages. One advantage was a pre-sold property with built-in fans. The big disadvantage was disappointing those fans by not bringing the artwork, the story sensibilities and the overall flavor of the strip to the screen. For instance, there has never been an adaptation of Krazy Kat which truly captured the look or the poetry of the original.

The Fleischers were successful with Popeye because they maintained much of the strip's personality and look. The studio tried adapting other characters, but they didn't succeed with either Henry, the Little King or Little Jimmy. All three received the same kind of pilot Popeye

got by co-starring in a Betty Boop cartoon.

The Fleischers didn't succeed with another adaptation until they produced the Superman shorts in the early Forties. Perhaps it was the success of this series that propelled the decision at Columbia to take on a project as challenging as Li'L Abner.

Thanks to the efforts of Dennis Kitchen and his Kitchen Sink Press, a new generation of comic strip fans are getting the chance to discover one of this country's premiere contributions to comic strip satire, Al Capp's "Li'L Abner." "Li'L Abner" was highly regarded in the Thirties, Forties and Fifties. So highly regarded, in fact, that when a collection of strips was published in the Fifties, the foreword and introduction was written by William Faulkner and Charles Chaplin!

Capp and his assistants created a lush and fairly subversive comic strip starring its classic innocent, Li'L Abner and his backwood family, the Yokums. Many of the most memorable stories had relatively little to do with Li'L Abner himself, but rather his innocence, or some might say stupidity, was the catalyst Capp needed to make a pointed satiric jab.

One of the repeating storylines in the strip during the early Forties was the pursuit of Li'L Abner by his long-suffering girlfriend Daisy Mae. The humor was generated by the fact Daisy Mae was drawn in the most voluptuous manner the censors would allow, and no red-blooded man in America would have minded being "caught" by her with the exception of Li'L Abner who wanted to spend time with his pet pig.

The problem facing the animation studio was how to adapt the lengthy stories, the satiric flavor and the rather complex characters of the

strip. Their solution was to focus on the re-occurring elements of the strip which would lend themselves to slapstick.

The worst Popeye cartoons were those which simply re-played a fight for Olive's affections between Popeye and Bluto...Olive meets Bluto, spurns Popeye, rejects Bluto's crude advances, Popeye saves her. It's clear watching these five shorts the Screen Gems crew were boiling down Capp's strip to this kind of simplistic repeating plot.

In the Li'L Abner shorts, Li'L Abner gets into trouble and his mother, Mammy Yokum, rescues him. Capp's Mammy Yokum is a formidable little woman with a great capacity for violence when defending her home and family. Capp used this element of the strip carefully, but Dave Fleischer and company saw this part of the strip as something they could repeat.

The best two shorts of the group are those which attempt to stay authentic to the comic strip. "Sadie Hawkin's Day" adapts the holiday which became an annual event in Capp's strip. Once a year, the single

women of Dogpatch get the opportunity of getting married by literally catching a husband in a no-holds barred race. Capp's readers relished the yearly contest between Li'L Abner, Daisy Mae and any other woman who desired Li'L Abner, and director Ben Wickersham tried to bring that to the screen.

What sabotages his efforts is the lackluster animation and terrible pacing of the short. Also undercutting the story is the use of Mammy Yokum as Li'L Abner's protector against Daisy Mae. In the strip, Mammy objected to Li'L Abner's extended bachelorhood, and wanted to see him married.

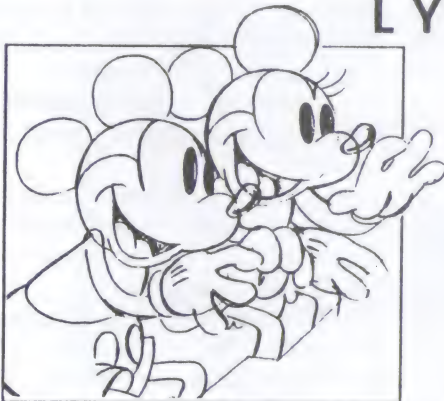
The other short which is almost bearable is "Kickapoo Juice," in which Li'L Abner is building a monument to his two ideal bachelors, Hairless Joe and Lonesome Polecat. In the strip, these two characters were constantly involved in distilling something called "Kickapoo Joy Juice." In this cartoon, Mammy Yokum decides that if she make these two guys respectable, Li'L Abner might get married, and she make the effort to destroy their supply of

Kickapoo Juice. How Mammy Yokum is used in these shorts makes one believe the Screen Gems crew saw her as Popeye in drag!

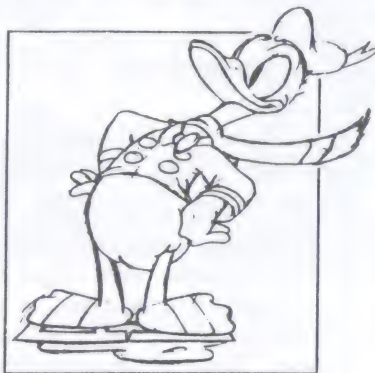
What is amazing about the Li'L Abner shorts is their crudeness. Reportedly this was the most expensive series of cartoons Columbia ever produced, but the actual animation hardly reaches the level of a standard Terrytoon. I realize that many animation fans think the loose animation style in many Terrytoons actually is an intentional stylistic statement, although one animator told me the real reason is "they didn't care."

By the last short, one is beginning to see some improvement, and one gets the sense the crew was getting some sort of handle on the property. It was too late, though, as the series had not made the impact Screen Gems had hoped. Columbia would not have a hit cartoon series until the late Forties when the Screen Gems unit was disbanded to make room for John Hubley and UPA Productions. The UPA team finally gave Columbia what the company had long wanted...a cartoon star in the form of Mr. Magoo.

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Bebe's Kids

There certainly have been animated productions based on stand-up comedy routines before (Lenny Bruce's *Thank You Mask Man* springs to mind), but I can't remember when a feature-length film was based on such subject material. *Bebe's Kids* breaks ground in that field as well as being a pioneer in animated ethnic humor.

Based on the late comedian Robin Harris' routine, *Bebe's Kids* tells the story a date from Hell. Like Harris's routines, this film isn't afraid to exploit scatological humor and use references which a lot of white America may not get. For example, I was the only person in the audience who laughed when Harris described a "Dolomite" movie! When a group of men are admiring an attractive woman one remarks, "Reminds me of *Players* magazine, June 1973." Another rejoins, "Yeah, Pam Grier!" The rating of PG-13 certainly is appropriate.

The central character is a caricature of Harris, and he recounts his experiences over drinks in a neighborhood bar. After meeting a beautiful woman at the funeral, he sets up a date with her and her son to an Disneyland-like amusement park called "Fun World." His dreams of an idyllic time are shattered when he picks up his date and find there are three more children slated to go with them.

Bebe is a friend of his date, Jameka, and has dropped her kids off to go along. Naturally, Robin is not pleased, especially when he realizes these kids are foul-mouthed and ill-mannered.

The best moments of the film are when Harris is trying to balance dealing with the kids with getting to know Jameka better.

The problems of this film are several-fold. Throughout the film, the audience's sympathies are with Robin and Jameka, but in a very self-conscious scene the actions of Bebe's kids are justified by the kids themselves as an expression of freedom. This is supposed

to make us like the kids better which sets us up for the conclusion of the film. Instead, it undercuts the comedy which both precedes and follows the scene.

Up until this point, the film was a loose street-wise look at modern dating, but after it (a very silly rap song during a "trial" of the kids), the tone shifts to one of social relevancy. It really doesn't work.

Another big problem is the animation itself. Produced in six different locations, the production is at the level of a Saturday morning cartoon. Some of the character animation is fairly effective, but once again it's the case of the voice out-acting the animation. Faizon Love does a fine job impersonating Harris.

Despite its flaws, it's refreshing to see someone attempt to do something different.

The feature was accompanied by the short *The Itsy Bitsy Spider* written by former *Saturday Night Live* writer Michael O'Donoghue which displays a PG-rated version of his caustic wit. Even though the direction by Matthew O'Callahan has more flair than the feature possesses, the short is fairly mediocre. Again, though, it's refreshing to see a company other than Disney making a commitment to short subjects.

G. Michael Dobbs

4th Annual Animation Celebration: The Movie; 1992 Festival of Animation

I have attended several of these festivals and celebrations and have always come away with several gems or at least one precious stone. These two were no different. Some stuff sparkled and some was a waste of celluloid. Most, alas, went in one eye and out the other.

Some themes seem to run throughout: As soon as I see a backward R on the screen and a lot of consonants, I know I am going to get "The Message." And the message is always too long, too heavy and way too obvious. I am so tired of Soviet block animators. Yes, I am politi-

cally aware. I understand that certain countries have been repressing their people socially, politically and artistically but I am also tired of "Color? You want color? The people are starving for freedom and you want humor?!! Our people are struggling against the oppressive military masses and you want chuckles?!! All right, we will give you a quick smile of irony, but back to the message!"

Most obvious of these type is *Canfilm* by Zlatin Radney of Bulgaria. It is a parable of a society of tincan people living in a cardboard world. As different leaders usurp each other, each forcing their own ideological fillings on the masses, the cans are forced to be literally crammed full of new fruit or vegetable. Got that? Now read that paragraph again, real slow, because this film takes 18 minutes to make that point. I still don't know if Radney is being ironic and clever (note the title - *CanFilm* or *Cannes Film*?) or just dull, long and obvious.

Another similar film is *Weeds* by Thomas Stellmach of East Germany. This film is a horizontal Berlin Wall. This is another political sociological statement that had the advantage of at least being more entertaining than *CanFilm*.

The Hunter by Mikhail Aldashin of the U.S.S.R. is at least nonpolitical. It's just dull.

I am so glad the Iron Curtain has collapsed somewhat, because maybe we can see films that aren't always political and rife with messages.

Other films in both of these festivals fall into the "One Joke" category - One liner visual punch line cartoons. Examples of this include *Dinko's Day*, *Street Sweeper*, and *Jesus Visits New York*. The only way these films work is for them to be quick, brief, and to the point - if you see the joke coming, it's all for naught. Jesus visits New York and has his halo stolen. That's it! More than a minute long and it would have failed miserably. (Actually, *CanFilm* is an example of a one joke film that fails so miserably because it pounds its one joke

into you for so long.)

Then there are the "Art" films. Either there aren't as many being made these days or less of these seem to make it to Animation Festivals. Art films are usually just for atmosphere. *Amore Bechiami* is nice because it takes an Italian opera and turns the words into art. Because I don't speak Italian and don't know what they're saying, I can appreciate the literal beauty of the words as they appear on the screen with different typefaces and designs based on the words. *Mona Lisa Descending the Staircase* was literally a real art piece. It almost covered the entire history of art as each piece transformed into each other. It starts with cave drawing as and metamorphs into the next up through DaVinci, Picasso and up to Warhol. - An interesting film and perfect for Intro to Art History classes.

Then there are "narrative" films, telling a story. No punch line, no message, just a story. *Ken Lister's Balloon* is done in clay animation and is quite funny, as the main character has an entire torture chamber for balloons while the little girl tries to reclaim her own balloon.

There are also "Commercials" such as MTV spots and other promotional hoopla. This is especially true in computer animation it seems. In a series done for natural gas by what's-his-face, you know, the guy who does *Creature Comforts*, more creatures speak to the invisible interviewer. I am glad the animators are finding the work and that some innovation gets through, but at the same time, one would rather see artists following their own vision. Richard Willaims is an example of someone who has been making excellent commercials for years to support the work he wants to do. You do what you have to do so you can do what you want to do. I only take umbrage with artists who only do the commercial work, never showing much originality of their own.

MTV's *World Problems* was the result of a contest wherein people submitted ideas on solving social and ecological problems (overpopulation, recycling, literacy; whatever is PC nowadays) that were then animated by professional animators. This is a series of sappy oversimplified answers that seem more intent on jerking tears than lifting con-

sciousness. Only one stands out: Bob Sebastian's *Trees*. Treebeard would have loved this. (Esoteric enough?)

Conclusion? Uh. "Animators are the cwaziest people." Nah. Let's see. How's this:

By their very nature, short animations either work or they don't. There is not much room for argument. A feature film can be justified even if it did not completely fulfill its promise. Short stories, like short fiction, has to get right to the point and get its message across or it fails. Fortunately if a short film is unsuccessful it ends soon.

The gems are out there, and they are more than worth digging for. All of the festivals are always worth seeing to find the gems, especially the Spike and Mike-produced festivals.

Scott Gillespie

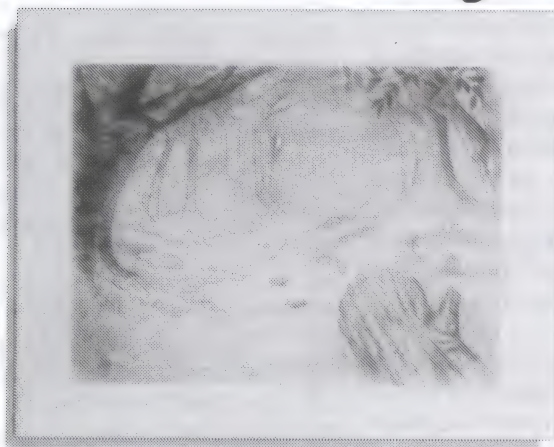
Cool World

As much as I am a Bakshi fan, I must admit I am never fully satisfied by any of his films. They are always this close to being a well made film. There's always something missing, and primarily the thing that's missing is the story.

LIMITED
EDITION

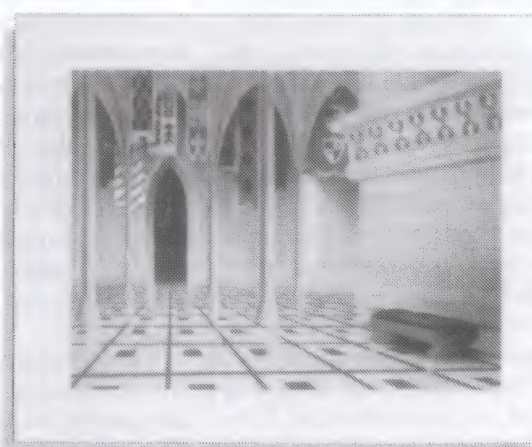
Background Art

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Print



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Robin's Glen

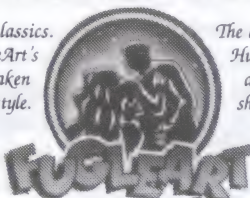


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The Great Hall

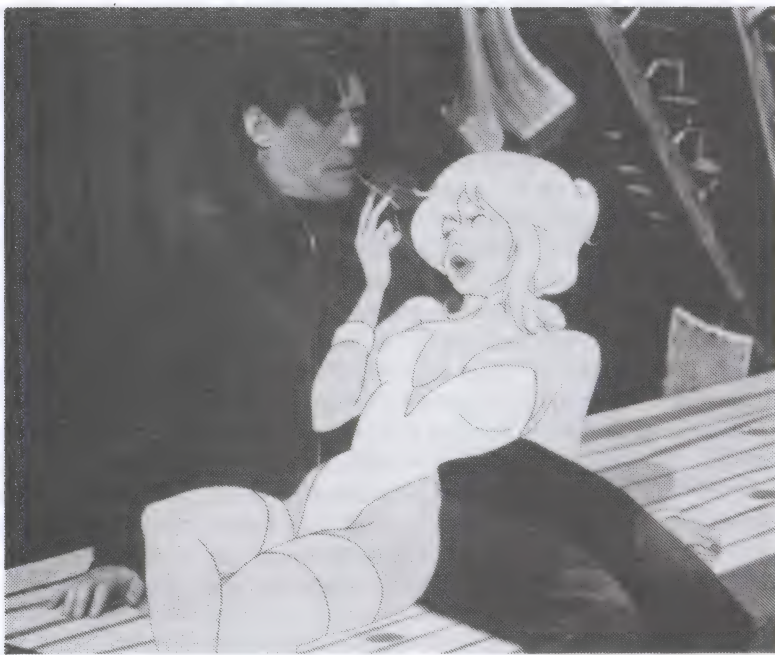
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© 1992 Paramount Pictures

Such potential! A separate toon world, more coherent, nastier looking, and dangerous than Toon Town, where toons (here called "doodles") live their empty lives, constantly dropping anvils from rooftops, chasing each other with large mallets and guns, and generally behaving like all our favorite violent cartoon characters.

The idea, although similar to *Roger Rabbit*, is a good one. Then the "plot" starts. Jack Deebs, an underground cartoonist whose book *Cool World* is a success is drawn into the real Cool World (that he thinks he invented) by Holli Wood who wants to become human. She can do this by having sex with a human. There's also a human cop in Cool World who tries to make sure this doesn't happen, and his girlfriend, a doodle.

Now where do I begin listing the story problems in this mish-mash?

First, from whose point of view is the story told, the cop or the artist? Why does the film begin with a long scene introducing the cop's accident and his arrival in Cool World? Why is the fact that Deebs is in jail for killing his ex-lover important to the plot? Why is he the only person in the real world who can "see" Cool World? Did it exist before he began drawing it? Why is there a giant spike on top of a hotel in Las Vegas that lets loose Cool World to infest our world? Who put it there and did Cool World not exist

before it was put there?

The plot problems of this film are many but then so are the visual delights. Credit goes to Production Designer Michael Corenblith, Conceptual Designer Barry Jackson and Illustrator Ian Miller for the surreal look of *Cool World*. Since *Cool World* is a drawing, it is two dimensional, and watching the live action actors walk around two dimensional sets is disconcerting but works in an odd sort of way. Personally, I believe it was a cost cutting measure to prevent Bakshi from having to shade his toons like the toons in *Roger Rabbit*. However, this is the downfall of the design; the lack of shading in this dark world made the differences between the humans and the doodles too great. Unlike *Roger Rabbit*, I was always aware that the actors weren't really "there."

The nonstop action in the eerie Cool World is hilarious. The amount of anvils, fast cars and wild and crazy inhabitants distract from the film's meager plot and keeps us entertained. The best bits come at the end, when Deebs is transformed into a super hero with gigantic muscles and a typical brainless attitude. ("Give me the spike, Deebs." "No, it would be wrong, and I must save humanity!" "Please?" "Oh, OK.") I felt like I was reliving the best of *Mighty Mouse* all over again.

And speaking of the voluptuous Holli

Wood, I have to admit that I was a bit insulted by the juvenile sexual fantasies to which Bakshi caters. Deebs desires Holli only for her body; she certainly has no other redeeming qualities. Neither love interest showed any sign of intelligence or had any reason to exist beyond jiggling and prancing for our voyeuristic pleasures. But then again, one can't blame the doodles — *no one* in this film had any character development. (In some ways, *Cool World* reminded me of the equally obnoxious and empty *Heavy Metal* movie.)

Cool World is visually a feast but ultimately empty, lacking the character development and storyline to make it worth seeing more than once. Come on, Ralph, we know you've got it in you — make the film we want you to make. Don't blame the small budgets you have to work with; a better script isn't that expensive in comparison. Until then, I will remain your fan because I know your potential if not your output.

Mike Ventrella

The Great Mouse Detective

When the current animation boom started a few years ago, I predicted that *The Great Mouse Detective* would clean up when Disney re-released it. History has proven me wrong, but I still maintain it's a good film that has never been really given a fair shake.

The Disney Studio seems to have no confidence in the film, which would explain why it's been released under three different titles since 1984! In Europe, it was named after the children's book series that inspired it, *Basil of Baker Street*, and in its current run, it's called *The Adventures of the Great Mouse Detective*. This has caused several sources, including *Entertainment Weekly*, to report that there's more than one movie about Basil and his sidekick Dr. Dawson!

To add to the confusion, the studio originally announced a March 22, 1991 release date, which was promoted through integrated trailers on *The Rescuers Down Under* and announcements at the theme parks and Disney Stores. It actually opened 11 months later with virtually no publicity, not even the traditional merchandising that pushed many a Disney film into the public consciousness.

Given the studio's indifference, I

began to wonder if I'd romanticized Basil and company. But I think I enjoyed *The Great Mouse Detective* even more the second time around! The premise is fairly simple. The rodents of Victorian London have built a society mimicking the humans whose dwellings they share, so naturally when a toymaker mouse is kidnapped, his young daughter seeks out Basil, who lives beneath Sherlock Holmes' flat. Basil, a difficult sort of chap, is disinterested in the case until he realizes that his arch nemesis, Professor Rattigan, is responsible. From that point on "the game is afoot" in a lively parody of Holmesian lore, complete with an undercover sequence at a sleazy bar that's a deadly take-off on a scene from the old Basil Rathbone films. If you're well versed in the works of Conan Doyle, you'll find lots of references, but that's only a bonus. The story is well crafted, witty and the characters, even Rattigan, are memorable and likable.

While the animation may look "flat" to those accustomed to the look of more recent Disney features, the design is rich and true to the subject matter. A sequence inside Big Ben, one of the studio's earliest attempts to combine traditional and computer animation, is quite well done.

Like most Disney features, *The Great Mouse Detective* is a musical, but in this case, the songs are unusually (and

delightfully) macabre. Rattigan's song, delivered in sinister style by Vincent Price, has haunted me for nearly eight years. There's also a snappy number performed by Shani Wallis in the bar scene that would be worth the cost of the tape. Those who haven't yet made his acquaintance should look for *The Great Mouse Detective* at your local video store. It's bound to be a pleasant surprise.

Judith Reboy

Little Nemo: Adventures in Slumberland

It's unusual enough that *Little Nemo: Adventures in Slumberland* is a new Japanese animated feature based on an early American comic strip that — while beloved by comics fans — was long ago forgotten by the public at large. Stranger still, the movie's credits boast many names that are familiar from American cartoons of thirty, forty and fifty years ago: Frank Thomas, Ollie Johnston, Ken Anderson, Corny Cole, Paul Julian, David Hilberman, David Swift, and others. And then there's the unlikely team credited with Nemo's story: Ray Bradbury, Robert Towne (screenwriter of Roman Polanski's *Chinatown*), Chris Columbus (director of *Home Alone*), and the French cartoonist Moebius, among others.

Unfortunately, the film isn't nearly as interesting as the collection of names

that roll by during the closing credits. It's a disappointing hodgepodge that feels a little like a contemporary Japanese production, a little like a vintage Disney one, and — least of all — a little like Winsor McCay's classic comic strip.

McCay's *Little Nemo* was wonderful, but the wonder sprung almost entirely from McCay's talents as a draughtsman and designer of Sunday comic pages. The characters were one-dimensional, the dialogue ("Hello! Who are you? Or what are you? Um! Look, Flip! At my friend!") was primitive, and the stories — Nemo's spectacular dreams — were usually excuses for McCay to exercise his visual imagination on paper. McCay's graphic abilities were so magnificent that none of his weaknesses mattered much.

In *Little Nemo: Adventures in Slumberland*, the situation is different. Part of the problem is that the film doesn't try to recreate McCay's art style. Some of the background characters are drawn in an approximation of his style, and a few visual ideas from Nemo Sunday pages have been woven into the story — but almost everything else is done in a style that owes more to Disney than McCay.

In the movie, Nemo is a pajama-clad, generic little boy who's drawn so much in the Disney mold that he could be mistaken for a lost member of the Darling family from *Peter Pan*. His best friend is



The real McCay - a detail from a classic Little Nemo strip

Icarus, a flying squirrel who wears an aviator's cap and spouts barely-decipherable, high-pitched gibberish. Icarus seems like a Jiminy Cricket-style Disney sidekick filtered through a Japanese-animation sensibility; he serves no purpose other than to disrupt every sequence he's in, as well as destroy the reality of those few scenes in which Nemo is awake and not off in Slumberland.

The characters Nemo meets once he snoozes his way into Slumberland are similarly uncomfortable blends of McCay, Disney, and Japanese animation influences. King Morpheus, who brings Nemo to Slumberland to serve as official playmate to his daughter, Princess Camille, is simply jolly old Santa Claus, down to the white beard and oversized tummy. Maurice Sendak has rightly described McCay's version of Morpheus's daughter, the Princess, as being "fortyish-looking;" in the movie, though, she keeps vacillating between looking and behaving like a Disney little girl and a typical Japanese animation one. She does have one of the film's most appealing voices, thanks to actress Laura Mooney.

The second most important character in the newspaper strip was Nemo's sidekick Flip, an irascible, apparently middle-aged clown who resembles Bringing Up Father's Jiggs in greasepaint. The movie hews fairly close to McCay's portrayal of the character — and sensibly casts Mickey Rooney as his voice — but Flip doesn't make the transition to a modern animated cartoon with much success. The character, like Slumberland as a whole, is inherently a creature of his particular place and time: the Sunday comics pages of the first few years of this century. (It's worth noting that when Winsor McCay himself tried reviving the Nemo strip in the 1920s, it was considered out of step with the times even then.)

While *Little Nemo: Adventures in Slumberland* borrows elements from a number of Disney films — its villain, the Nightmare King, is a carbon-copy of Chernobog, from *Fantasia's* Night on Bald Mountain sequence — its story bears a particular resemblance to that of *Pinocchio*. In both films, the protagonist is a little boy who is tempted into misbehavior, then rescues his father figure and seems, momentarily, to have died in the process.

But this film doesn't have the emotional and logical framework of *Pinocchio* and the other great Disney features. The story is full of naked plot devices that exist only to advance the story, like a key that can unlock any door in the kingdom, which King Morpheus give to Nemo along with a stern warning about one particular door he must never open (which Flip later tempts Nemo into unlocking, thus opening the door to Nightmare Land). And then when Nemo bravely voyages off to rescue King Morpheus, it's not nearly as dramatic as it might have been, because the two characters' relationship has been only tenuously defined earlier in the movie.

Significantly, some of the strongest moments in the film are some early dream sequences, in which Nemo's bed drifts over a decaying city and he's pursued by a forboding locomotive, that make no pretense at contributing to the larger plot. The film also improves during the climactic scenes when Nemo is off in the dark, swamp-like Nightmare Land, saving Morpheus from the clutches of the Nightmare King — maybe because these moody sequences abandon any attempt at being faithful to McCay's work. The Nightmare Land scenes also introduce a troop of shaggy, Ewok-like goblins called

Oomps who — for me, at least — are the most likeable characters in the film. (McCay's Nemo had a creature called the Oomp, but he didn't look like these fellows.)

One thing that almost all the good scenes have in common is that they're dominated by the film's excellent effects animation. Visually, the film is a mixed bag — while the character animation is competent, and occasionally better than that, the prosaic art direction in the Slumberland sequences manages to make the place look a little like a second-rate circus. In general, the quality of the artwork brought to my mind Hanna-Barbera's two Disneyesque theatrical features, *Charlotte's Web* and *Heidi's Song*.

If nothing else, *Little Nemo: Adventures in Dreamland* may serve to reintroduce Winsor McCay's work to America; it's even led to a Little Nemo cartridge for the Nintendo GameBoy. Even in the the movie's jumbled interpretation, there is something inspiring and admirable about McCay's creation. That may be what the audience of small children I attended the movie with were responding to when they politely applauded it as it ended — something very unusual for a non-Disney animated film.

Harry McCracken

WRITERS! ARTISTS!

ANIMATO! is looking for articles on all aspects of animation for future issues. We're looking especially for a continuing consumer-oriented column on animation collectibles, profiles/interviews on models animators such as Jim Danforth, coverage of the contemporary European animation scene and breaking animation news.

We also need spot illustrations, and one or two page comic strip commentaries on any aspect of animation.

Please contact Mike Dobbs, 17 Spruce St., Springfield, MA 01105 and enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope for a quick reply!

SURE, THEY ENTERTAINED US, BUT...

How did cartoon characters amuse themselves?

© PETE FITZGERALD

'91

GEORGE JETSON WAS A SVENGALI IN HIS SPARE TIME...



WHEN NOT APPEARING IN THEIR POPULAR CARTOON SHOW, **TENNESSEE TUXEDO + CHUMLEY** WERE OFTEN HIRED AS HIT MEN, ALBEIT INEPT ONES...



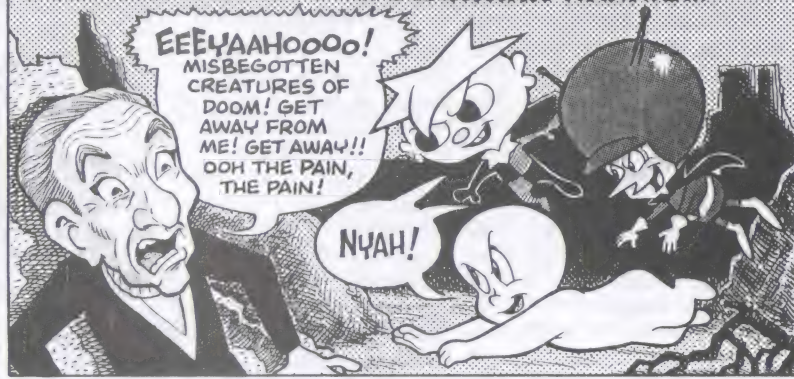
MOST OF **CECIL THE SEASICK SEA SERPENT'S** FREE TIME WAS SPENT LURKING IN PHONY CANS OF PEANUT BRITTLE...



YOGI + BOO BOO GOT THEIR JOLLIES BY HASSLING PASSERSBY WITH THIS TIMEWORN PRANK...



WHILE THEIR RESPECTIVE PROGRAMS WERE ON HIATUS, LONGTIME PALS **CASPER, WINKY DINK, AND THE GREAT GAZOO** WOULD SPOOK "LOST IN SPACE" STAR **JONATHAN HARRIS**...



FELIX THE CAT LOVED TO FREQUENT THE RITZIEST, MOST EXPENSIVE RESTAURANTS IN TOWN AND THEN ONLY ORDER GLASSES OF WATER...



DEPUTY DOG SECRETLY RULED FRANCE...



DROOPY LIKED TO BEAT THE DEVIL AT CHESS.



Animato film poll

What are your favorite animated films? Write to us and vote, sending us your top ten (in order please) in each category. Remember that you can vote for films not on this list! And, once again, forgive us for printing these lists in small type and without directors' credits, but this enables us to print as large a list as possible.

THEATRICAL SHORTS

1. Duck Amuck
2. What's Opera, Doc?
3. Little Rural Riding Hood
4. One Froggy Evening
5. Duck Dodgers in the 24 1/2 Century
6. Coal Black and de Sebben Dwarfs
7. The Band Concert
8. Rabbit of Seville
9. Duck! Rabbit! Duck!
10. The Dover Boys
11. Bad Luck Blackie
12. Robin Hood Daffy
13. Snow White
14. Popeye Meets Sinbad
15. Tummy Trouble
16. The Great Piggy Bank Robbery
17. The Old Mill
18. Red Hot Riding Hood
19. King Size Canary
20. Popeye Meets Ali Baba's 40 Thieves
21. Bimbo's Initiation
22. Rabbit Seasoning
23. Porky in Wackyland
24. Wabbit Twouble
25. Minnie the Moocher
26. Book Revue
27. Lucky Ducky
28. The Cat Who Hated People
29. Knighty Knight Bugs
30. Superman
31. Hareway to the Stars
32. Fast and Furryous
33. Roller Coaster Rabbit
34. Swing Shift Cinderella
35. The Skeleton Dance
36. Russian Rhapsody
37. The Mad Doctor
38. Trick or Treat
39. Clock Cleaners
40. Mad as a Mars Hare
41. Mechanical Monsters
42. Der Fuhrer's Face
43. Screwy Squirrel
44. Mickey's Trailer
45. High Note
46. Bugs Bunny Nips the Nips
47. Cookie Carnival
48. Lonesome Ghosts
49. I Love to Singa
50. The Cat Concerto
51. Magical Maestro
52. Feed the Kitty
53. A Wild Hare
54. Gerald McBoingboing
55. Kitty Komered
56. Alladin's Lamp
57. Dizzy Red Riding Hood
58. Rooty Toot Toot
59. Scrappy's Art Gallery
60. Karnival Kid
61. Mickey's Christmas Carol
62. Apple Andy
63. Lady Play Your Mandolin
64. Let's Celebrate
65. Mickey's Follies
66. Solid Serenade
67. The Pointer
68. Scrappy's Television
69. Show Biz Bugs
70. Barber of Seville
71. Through the Mirror
72. Dripalong Daffy
73. Happy-Go-Nutty
74. Three Little Pups
75. How to Play Football
76. The Screwy Truant
77. Sh-h-h-h
78. Birds Anonymous
79. Bugs Bunny Rides Again
80. The Night Before Christmas
81. Trailer Horn
82. The Brave Tin Soldier
83. Rabbit Fire
84. The Prince and the Pauper
85. Betty Boop, MD
86. Who Killed Cock Robin?
87. In My Merry Oldsmobile
88. The Duxorcist
89. Three Little Bops
90. The Hep Cat
91. Chips Ahoy
92. Rugged Bear
93. The Poet and the Peasant
94. Little Red Riding Rabbit
95. My Favorite Duck
96. A Bear for Punishment
97. Daffy Doc
98. Daffy Doodles
99. Buckaneer Bunny
100. Eugene the Jeep
101. Moving Day
102. The Sunshine Makers
103. The Two Mousketeers
104. Superabbit
105. Chips Ahoy
106. Bully for Bugs
107. You've Got to Be a Football Hero
108. The New Car
109. Uncle Tom's Cabana
110. Peace on Earth
111. Bacall to Arms

INDEPENDENT SHORTS

1. The Wizard of Speed and Time
2. Bambi Meets Godzilla
3. The Great Cognito
4. Animato
5. The Big Snit
6. KnickKnack
7. Technological Threat
8. Futuropolis
9. Tin Toy
10. Quasi at the Quackadero
11. Closed Mondays
12. Broken Down Film
13. Anna and Bella
14. The Collector
15. Luxo, Jr.
16. Tango
17. Vincent
18. 25 Ways to Stop Smoking
19. The Street
20. Flying Fur
21. The Critic
22. Ubu
23. The Cat Came Back
24. Crac
25. Opera
26. Stanley and the Dinosaur
27. Van Kant Danz
28. And She Was
29. Make Me Psychic
30. Elbowing
31. Jumping
32. Getting Started
33. The Fly
34. Adventures of an *
35. The Devil's Ball
36. Snookles
37. Seaside Woman
38. Your Face
39. Sunbeam
40. Furies
41. Sundae in New York
42. Adventures of Nick and Sugar
43. Rapid Eye Movements
44. Special Delivery
45. Pas de Deux
46. Frank Film
47. Lupo the Butcher
48. The Interview
49. Oil Spot and Lipstick
50. The Butterfly Ball
51. Skywhales
52. Jimmy the C
53. Tony DePeltire
54. Film Film Film
55. Sledgehammer
56. Allegretto
57. The Farm
58. Mosaic
59. Charades
60. Housekeeper
61. Vixen and Hare
62. Closet Encounters of the Nerd Kind
63. Get a Job
64. How to Kiss
65. Sand Castle
66. Hot Stuff
67. Marathon
68. Silius Mariner
69. Thank You Mask Man
70. Viewmaster
71. Money for Nothing
72. Bridge to Your Heart
73. Sing Beast Sing
74. Face Like a Frog
75. Opposites Attract
76. La Tendresse du Maudit
77. Chromasaurus
78. Istanbul (Not Constantinople)
79. French Windows
80. Fraidy Cat
81. Anijam
82. Time Tripper
83. Ersatz
84. Moonbird
85. The Capital "P"
86. The Harlem Shuffle
87. Every Dog's Guide to Safety
88. Individual Choice
89. Cat's Cradle
90. Rarg
91. Rupert and the Frog Song
92. Big Time
93. Dinosaur
94. Genius of Love
95. Adventures of an Ant
96. Joy Ride
97. Harpae
98. On Land, At Sea, In the Air
99. The Man Who Planted Trees
100. Late Night with Myron
101. Neighbors
102. Four Wishes
103. Leonardo da Vinci
104. Silent Lucidity
105. Red Ball Express
106. The Roar From Within
107. Jack Mac and Rad Boy
108. Cat and Mouse
109. (Who Will) Be My Gas?
110. Dentally Insane
111. You Don't Have to Die
112. Tuber's Two Step
113. Crackers
114. Accidents Will Happen

FEATURE FILMS

1. Pinocchio
2. Fantasia
3. Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs
4. Who Framed Roger Rabbit
5. The Little Mermaid
6. The Secret of NIMH
7. Yellow Submarine
8. Bambi
9. Watership Down
10. 101 Dalmations
11. The Jungle Book
12. Wizards
13. Heavy Metal
14. Lady and the Tramp
15. Dumbo
16. Allegro Non Troppo
17. Rock & Rule
18. Tron
19. Laputa: Castle in the Sky
20. Warriors of the Wind
21. Beauty and the Beast
22. Be Forever Yamato
23. Peter Pan
24. The Hobbit
25. The Black Cauldron
26. Lensman
27. The Rescuers Down Under
28. Three Caballeros
29. The Lord of the Rings
30. Robin Hood
31. Sleeping Beauty
32. The Brave Little Toaster
33. The Last Unicorn
34. An American Tail
35. Castle of Cagliostro
36. Animalympics
37. My Neighbor Totoro
38. Cinderella
39. Animal Farm
40. Akira
41. The Great Mouse Detective
42. Fire and Ice
43. Mr. Bug Goes to Town
44. Adventures of Mark Twain
45. Phoenix 2772
46. Raggedy Ann and Andy
47. Galaxy Express 999
48. Gay Purree
49. Song of the South
50. A Boy Named Charlie Brown
51. Macross: Do You Remember Love?
52. Fritz the Cat
53. The Land Before Time
54. The Return of the King
55. The Rescuers
56. An American Tail II: Fievel Goes West
57. Grendel Grendel Grendel
58. Icier
59. Alice in Wonderland
60. Oliver and Company
61. Puss in Boots
62. Cool World
63. The Fox and the Hound
64. The Plague Dogs
65. The Chipmunk Adventure
66. Fantastic Planet
67. Terra Hei
68. Sea Prince and Fire Child
69. Rock-a-Doodle
70. A Man Called Flintstone
71. Panda and the Magic Serpent
72. Dirty Pair
73. Urusei Yatsura: Only You
74. Windaria
75. Wizard of Speed and Time
76. Fun and Fancy Free
77. The Phantom Tollbooth
78. Crusher Joe
79. Maison Ikkoku
80. Coonskin
81. The Sword in the Stone
82. Orange Road
83. Ferngully
84. Vampire Hunter D
85. Make Mine Music
86. Snoopy Come Home
87. American Pop
88. Lupin III: Mambo
89. Twice Upon a Time
90. The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe
91. Jack and the Witch
92. Saludos Amigos
93. Starchaser
94. Gulliver's Travels
95. The Aristocats
96. Heavy Traffic
97. Wannabes
98. A Flight of Dragons
99. Be Be's Kids
100. Little Nemo

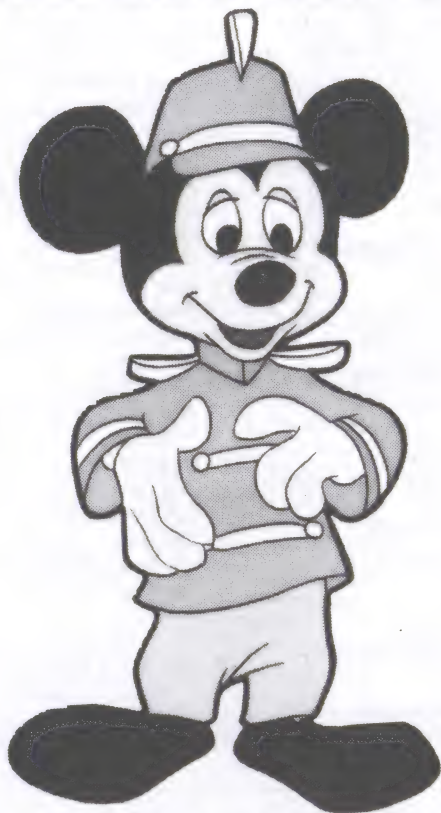
TELEVISION SERIES

1. Bullwinkle / Rocky and His Friends
2. Mighty Mouse: The New Adventures
3. Dangermouse
4. Jonny Quest
5. The Simpsons
6. George of the Jungle
7. Tiny Toon Adventures
8. Beany and Cecil
9. DuckTales
10. Star Trek
11. The Flintstones
12. The Jetsons (old episodes)
13. Dungeons and Dragons
14. Starblazers
15. Robotech
16. Dirty Pair
17. Count Duckula
18. Chip and Dale's Rescue Rangers
19. Beetlejuice
20. Adventures of the Gummi Bears
21. Lupin III
22. Top Cat
23. Ren and Stimpy
24. TaleSpin
25. Kimba the White Lion
26. Alf Tales
27. Underdog
28. Darkwing Duck
29. The New Adventures of Winnie the Pooh
30. Yogi Bear
31. The Misadventures of Ed Grimley
32. Hoppity Hooper
33. Space Ghost
34. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
35. The Real Ghostbusters
36. Astro Boy
37. Fantastic Four
38. Huckleberry Hound
39. Garfield and Friends
40. Maple Town
41. Inspector Gadget
42. Cat's Eye
43. Roger Ramjet
44. Speed Racer
45. Herculoids
46. The Mighty Heroes
47. Ranma 1/2
48. The Charlie Brown and Snoopy Show
49. The Eighth Man
50. Scooby Doo Where Are You?
51. The Gumby Show
52. Bubblegum Crisis
53. KISSyfur
54. The Alvin Show
55. Marvel Superheroes
56. Little Shop of Horrors
57. Ewoks
58. The New Adventures of Flash Gordon
59. Cities of Gold
60. Dynomutt
61. Gatchaman
62. The Mighty Orbots
63. Thundarr the Barbarian
64. Wally Gator
65. Urusei Yatsura
66. Thundercats
67. Good Morning Spank
68. The Beatles
69. Mobile Suit Gundam
70. The Smurfs
71. Bananaman
72. Transformers
73. Orguss
74. Crusader Rabbit
75. G.I. Joe
76. Peter Potamus
77. Beany and Cecil (new episodes)
78. Muppet Babies
79. Bobby's World
80. Insert Assembly
81. Quick Draw McGraw
82. Secret Squirrel
83. Heathcliff and Friends
84. Galaxy High
85. The Hillbilly Bears
86. C.O.P.S.
87. Hong Kong Phooey
88. Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventures
89. Attack of the Killer Tomatoes
90. Rugrats
91. The Addams Family
92. Fish Police
93. Cool McCool
94. Tazmania

TELEVISION SPECIALS

1. How the Grinch Stole Christmas
2. A Charlie Brown Christmas
3. Family Dog
4. It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown
5. A Christmas Carol
6. A Doonesbury Special
7. Rikki Tikki Tavi
8. Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer
9. A Claymation Christmas
10. Garfield's Nine Lives
11. Ziggy's Gift
12. Garfield's Halloween
13. Here Comes Garfield
14. The Devil and Daniel Mouse
15. Mr. Magoo's Christmas Carol
16. The Lorax
17. Frosty the Snowman
18. Sport Goofy in Soccermania
19. The Snowman
20. Charlie Brown's All Stars
21. A Cosmic Christmas
22. Meet the Raisins
23. Pogo Special Birthday Special
24. Christmas in July
25. Banjo the Woodpile Cat
26. Kotec the White Seal
27. Rudolph's Shiny New Year
28. Here Comes Peter Cottontail
29. A Soldier's Tale
30. The Night Before Christmas
31. Garfield Goes Hollywood
32. The Mouse on the Mayflower
33. Daffy's Thanks for Giving Special
34. A Connecticut Rabbit in King Arthur's Court
35. Please Don't Eat the Planet
36. It's the Flashbeagle, Charlie Brown
37. Tattertown
38. Mowgli's Brothers
39. Really Rosie & Chicken Soup
40. Tiny Tree
41. Cathy
42. Garfield's Christmas
43. The Witches' Night Out
44. A BC Thanksgiving
45. It's a Mystery, Charlie Brown
46. A Claymation Easter
47. Madeline
48. The Raisins: Sold Out!
49. The Smurfs
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Even Today, He's Still The Leader Of The Band.



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And he's a part of the private collection of Esta Haight, an employee of Disney's animation department for 25 years!

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A Little Birdie Told Me

A Gossip Column by Thelma Scumm

by Thelma Scumm

Hello, drearies, it's me again back with more snotty comments on the current animation scene along with the latest gossip!

Hey, am I imagining things or what? Am I a big star or what? I am of course referring to *The Simpsons* episode (which appeared soon after my *Simpsons* comments in the last *Animato*) in which Homer says to a character named Thelma "Your name is Scum!" I am so tickled! I have to admit I am constantly surprised by the quality of the show. My favorite cartoon show of all time as anyone will tell you is Bakshi's *Mighty Mouse*, but *The Simpsons*, while not reaching to the absurd laugh-out-loud heights of some of the best MM episodes is more consistently funny. (There were some completely dreadful *Mighty Mouse* episodes after all.)

I also enjoy the fact that *The Simpsons* attempts to be constantly up to date - the week after Dan Quayle thought potato was spelled with an "e", Bart was writing "I will not misspell potato" on the blackboard; and after Bush's comment that he wanted American families to be "more like *The Waltons* rather than *The Simpsons*", Bart was shown watching this on TV and responded by saying "Hey, we're just like the *Waltons*. Both families spend a lot of time praying for the end of the depression." (Oh, and look for an upcoming *Tiny Toons* episode that satirizes *Saturday Night Live* — with guest host Bland Simpleton!)

Discrimination against Toons continues! Once again, *The Simpsons* was not nominated for best comedy in the Emmys this year although it easily is funnier and more entertaining than any of the live action nominees. That is why I

am urging all of my readers to write to your congressperson and demand a constitutional amendment to guarantee the rights of the dimensionally disabled.

Speaking of politics, our animated friends have made their endorsements in the political arena. (Gee, was it only issue 17 that I reported the endorsements for the '88 election?) In the primary season, *Elmer Fudd* showed his support for Paul Tsongas by saying "It is the wight time to ewect a pwesident who doesn't talk funny." Jerry Brown received support from *Marvin the Martain* and *Shirley the Loon*.

Ross Perot received the endorsement of his vocal coach *Foghorn Leghorn* as well as electronic snoop expert *Cool McCool*.

In the general election, George Bush has once again received the support of *Yosemite Sam* (because of the President's opposition to gun control) and *Scrooge McDuck*, close friend and business associate of the President's son Neil.

Bill Clinton meanwhile has received the support of *Avery's Wolf*, *Pepe Le Pew* and *Screwy Squirrel* (who may have thought he was voting for his favorite animator Walter Clinton). His running mate Al Gore received the endorsements of noted environmental activists *Bambi*, *Yogi Bear*, and *Captain Planet*.

By the way, are you interested in joining one of the many International Animated Film Societies? It's a great way to keep up on the latest gossip (and job opportunities in the animation field!) One of the biggest is ASIFA Hollywood, PO Box 787, Burbank CA 91503.

More Disney suits! The Philadelphia Orchestra Association is suing Disney for profits from the sale of the *Fantasia* video. the original contract made in

1940 of course did not cover royalties for video sales. I say! There is a very good precedent for this case: Peggy Lee's \$2.3 million dollar successful suit against Disney for royalties for the video release of *Lady and the Tramp*!

Disney's animated projects currently in development include *Swan Lake*, *Sinbad the Sailor*, *Homer's Odyssey*, and — ready? — *Silly Hillbillies on Mars*. Now could I make that up?

Bluth's newest *Thumbelina* is already being pitched to the toy stores for the Christmas season. Expect to see lots of *Thumbelina* dolls, books, and other toys soon coming your way. After all, what good is a movie unless you can merchandise it?

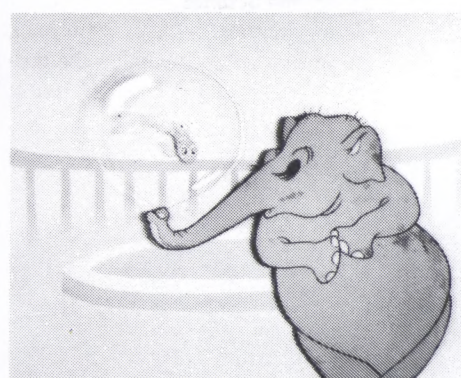
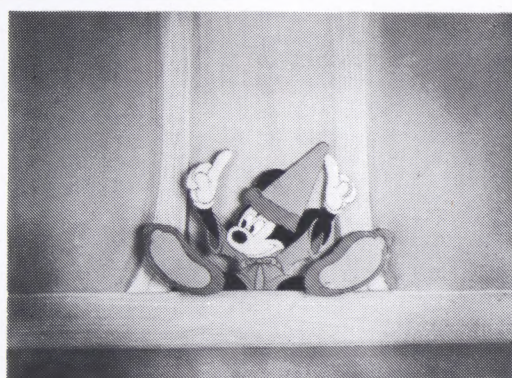
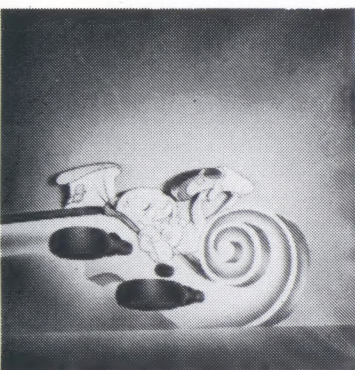
Richard Williams' *The Thief and The Cobbler*, a/k/a *Once Upon a Time* a/k/a *The Thief*, which *Animato* previewed way back in 1985, has hit another block to its release. It has run so much over budget and is so far behind schedule that the financial backers have taken over control. From what I have seen of this film, it is likely to be the most beautifully animated film ever made, but now you can expect to see some quick fixes in the middle. Rather than do it right, the moneyboys would rather do it fast. Oh well I guess art and business always collide.

Bebe's Kids wasn't that bad of a film. It originally was going to be live action you know until Robin Harris died at too early an age from a heart attack. Still, I think the voice of the baby would not be the same were it live action. . .

They will be missed: Art Babbit, Rudolph Ising, Joe Shuster.

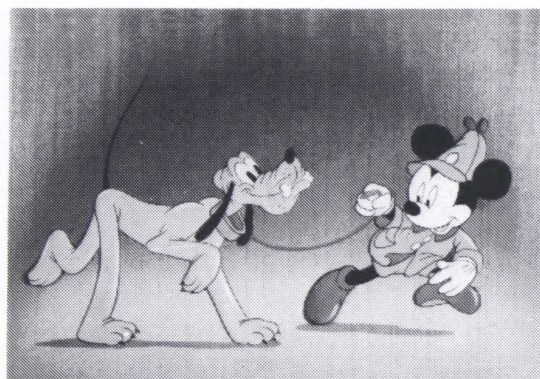
That's all I have room for this issue, so until next time, keep those home fires burning and *turn out that light!*

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